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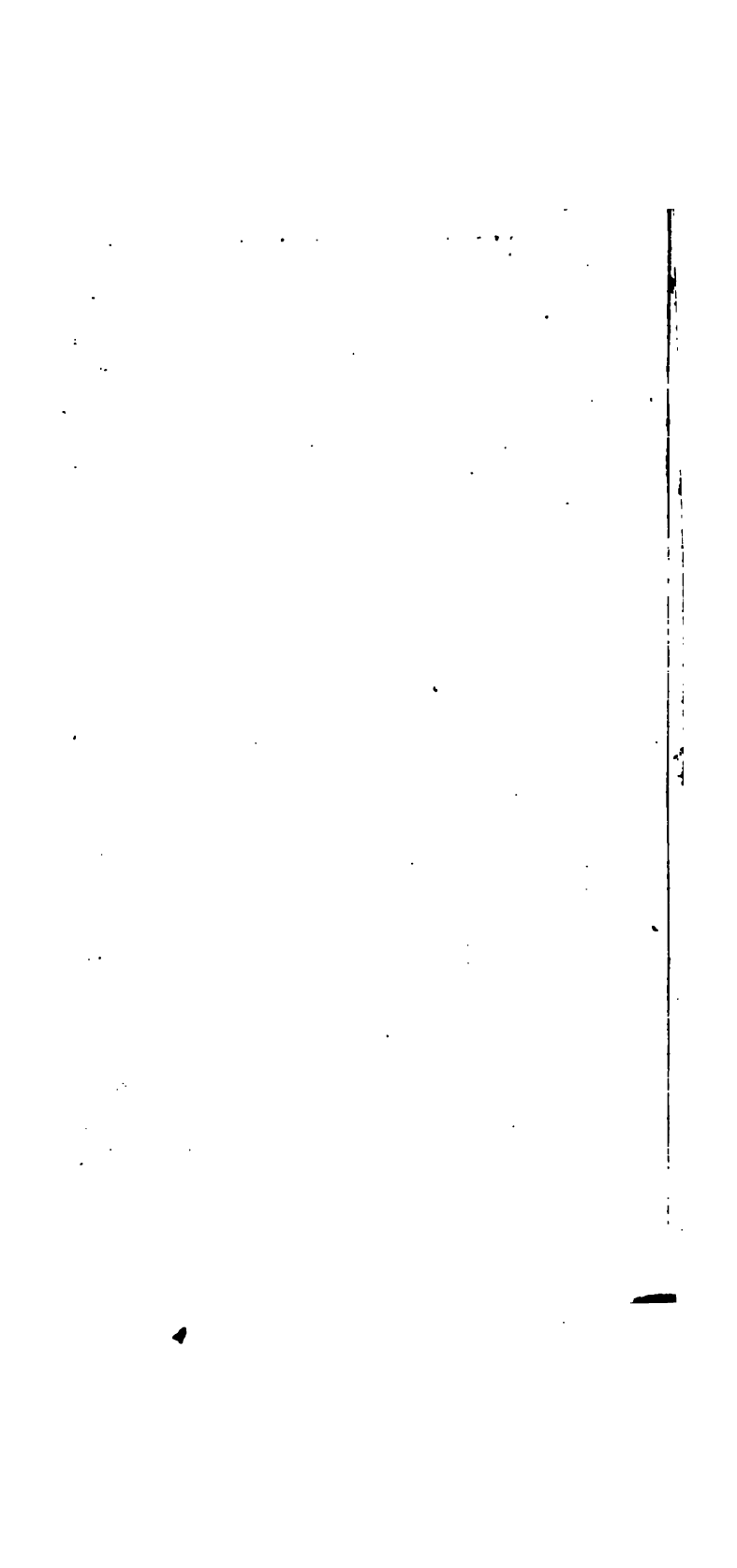
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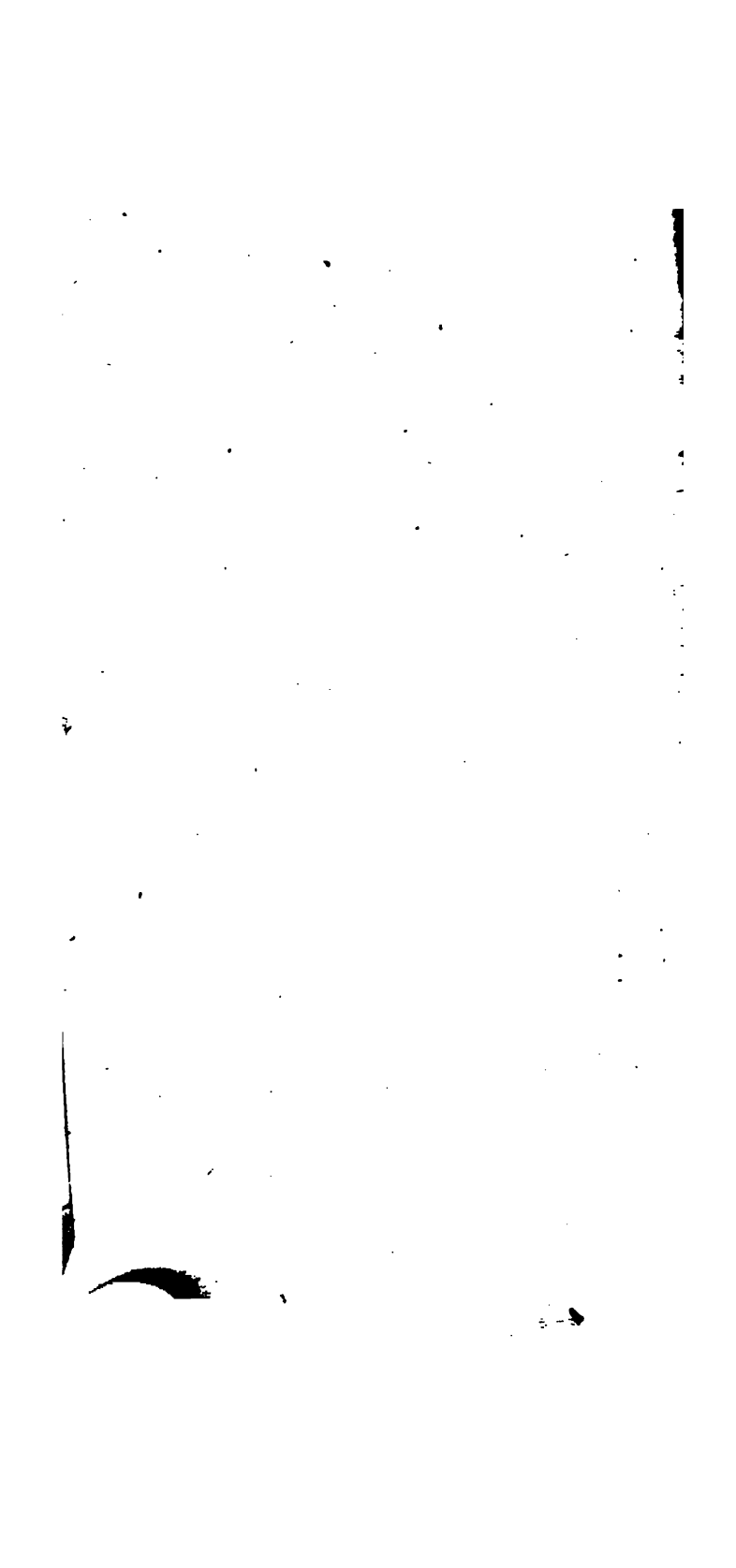
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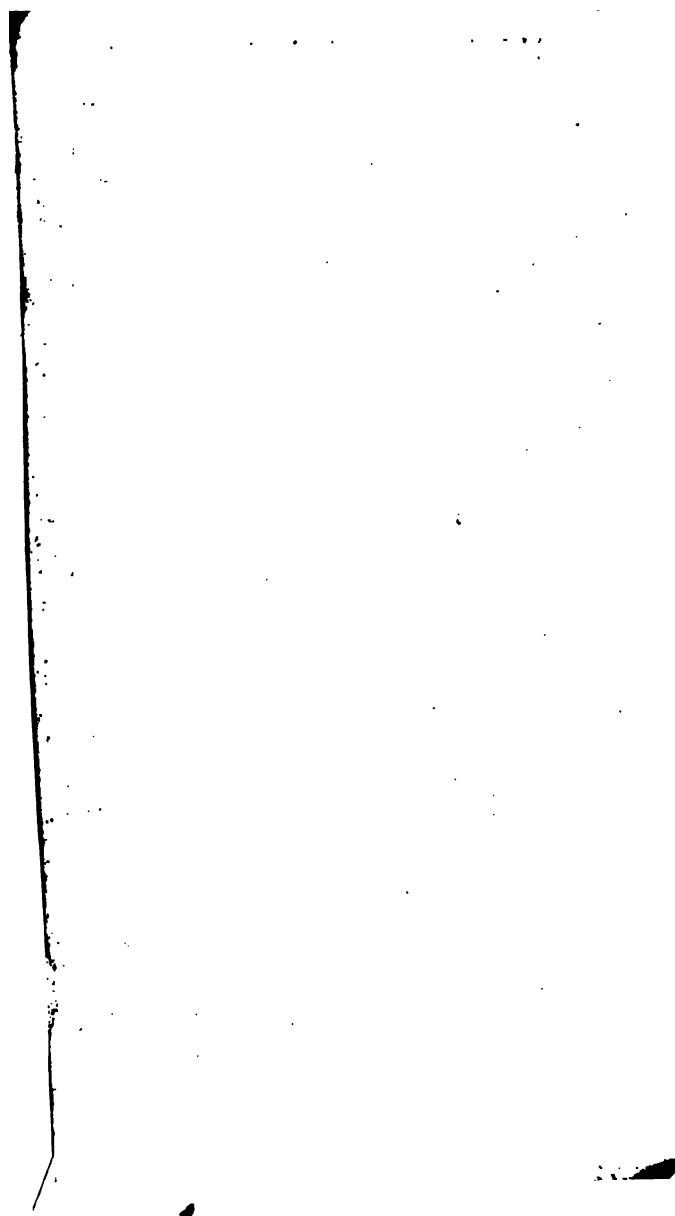
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THE
CASTLES
OF
Wolfnorth and Mont Eagle

"A TALE OF THE TIMES OF OLD,
"THE DEEDS OF DAYS OF OTHER YEARS."

By **St. Ann.**

EMBELLISHED WITH
ORIGINAL DESIGNS.

In Four Volumes.

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The Castles of Wollnorth and Mont Eagle.

CHAP. I.

“ Mourn, ye sons of song, mourn the death of the noble
Sithallin. - - - - -

Many were the deeds of thine arm, Cuthullin, thou son of
Semo !”

Ossian.

SIR Eustace was now, in his turn, attended by Sir Ethelred of Mont Rose, who was sufficiently recovered to have taken an active part in the siege of Ravensthorpe, and divided his time between Eustace and Edwin.

Two days saw Eustace no longer able to remain from the presence of his Ethelburga. and opposing the arguments of Mont Rose, he quitted his bed, and on his supporting arm entered the saloon. The Baroness was alone; when the door opened, she

A 2

turned,

turned, the colour fled her cheeks, and forgetful of all but her hero, she cried,—

‘My Eustace!’—and received him in her arms, as he sunk tremulous upon his bended knee. Sir Ethelred stood a moment, both surprised and affected; but soon he read the state of the lovers’ hearts, and heaving a sigh for the fate of poor Edwin, quitted the apartment.

Ethelburga now felt herself called upon to administer to the helpless Eustace, every comfort in her power. Nothing could appear more interestingly beautiful than he did at this moment; pale was his lovely and expressive countenance, and his fine dark eyes were fixed on the Baroness, with such a manly and open expression of tenderness, that her heart acknowledged him to be at once worthy to be the hero of her soul, and the representative, the dignified representative of her noble house; and filled with these ideas, unconscious of his presence, she exclaimed with enthusiasm—

‘Oh

‘ Oh noble Eustace ! why should I not
 ‘ yield my hand to one so justly capable of
 ‘ ennobling my race ?’

‘ Why, why should you not bless your
 ‘ adoring Eustace ?’ — cried the enraptured youth, as he fondly imprinted on her lovely hand, his ruby lips.—

‘ Oh my Ethelburga ! what should separate us ?’ —

At this moment, Sir Durant Fitz Osborne stole from an adjoining apartment. — Eustace started from his position, a glance of anger flashed from his eyes ; he knew not how much Fitz Osborne might have heard ; and Ethelburga was plunged into the utmost confusion. The glance of Sir Eustace did not pass unobserved by Fitz Osborne, who returned somewhat of a malicious smile, and as the young Lord regarded his pale haggard countenance, he shuddered involuntarily, and thought he plainly read the villain in his face. They were

were now broken in upon by numbers, and all further conversation prevented.

A week, to Ethelburga, the happiest of her life, had elapsed since the warriors arrived at Wolfnorth. The Baron of Elfwold had been to see his daughter, and brought Agnes with him, who now appeared more depressed and melancholy than ever. Sir Philip Fitz Aubrey, from some unknown cause, seemed to have gained uncommon spirits, but he was more silent than usual; Father Bertrand and he were constantly together, and a slight appearance of returning health in Edwin added to their happiness.

Sir Morcar now pressed for the ratification of his nuptials, and Stanley delicately urged to Augustine, that the luckless Eliss's memory would not be profaned by their weeping his loss together. A few days saw the marriages once more agreed upon, and, at Ethelburga's particular request, they were to be celebrated at Wolfnorth.

Joy

Joy and festivity reigned around; the martial trumpets were exchanged for the harps' enlivening strains, and the banners and trophies were enwreathed with blooming flowers. Sir Morcar, perfectly recovered of his wounds, glowed in all the blooming beauties of health, and diffused the gaiety and goodness of his heart to all around him; where'er he appeared, he illumined the surrounding objects by the honest smiles of his generous soul.

As Ethelburga regarded the happy lovers the day previous to their nuptials, her heart forgot its own sorrows in their joy; and the bosom of the old Baron once more glowed with pride and exalted ostentation.

On the day previous to the marriages, Sir Morcar on entering his dressing-room perceived a small note addressed to him on the table, and his astonishment was great, to read the following words:—

“ A Friend urges thee to beware of one
“ who

“ who fought stoutly by thy side ; but
 “ who now, to accomplish his own ends,
 “ seeks thy destruction.—*Beware!* and
 “ trust not to appearances. *Beware of*
 “ *the Eagle!*”—

‘ Accursed scrawl!’ (cried the generous
 De Mowbray), ‘ Blasted be the hand that
 ‘ would sow dissention between me and
 ‘ Eustace! I will instantly endeavour to
 ‘ discover the writer of this note, that I
 ‘ may guard myself against him.’

But in vain did the noble Morcar inquire
 of his esquires—who had written the note?
 No one knew how it came there,---or, know-
 ing, none would tell: after a vain in-
 quiry, he proceeded to the apartment of
 Sir Edwin Montague.

‘ My dear Montague,’ (he said, as he
 eloquently pressed him to his heart), ‘ in
 ‘ this chamber you first honoured me by
 ‘ your confidence, and awoke a friendship
 ‘ in my heart, that will cease but with my
 ‘ life,

‘ life,— may I then venture in this chamber
 ‘ to request a proof that my friendship is
 ‘ returned ?’

‘ Generous, beloved De Mowbray !’ (replied the gentle Edwin, gratitude beaming from his sweet eyes), ‘ require what
 ‘ thou wilt,—my life, my happiness, is a
 ‘ willing offering to thy service, --- thy
 ‘ kindness has soothed me in hours of
 ‘ misery and pain. Oh ! De Mowbray,
 ‘ when my aching heart beats no longer
 ‘ in this breast,---when this harassed spirit
 ‘ shall have flown to the bosoms of my
 ‘ ancestors, it will bless thee, and hover
 ‘ round thee while thou livest, telling
 ‘ thee in each passing gale its debt of
 ‘ gratitude.’--- .

‘ Dear youth !’---(returned De Mowbray, his soul melted even to tears, and unable for a moment to articulate his generous purpose) ‘ Dear Edwin, speak not of
 ‘ death,---Heaven forbid it ! I come to
 ‘ talk to thee of life, of joy, of happiness !’---

Edwin mournfully shook his head). ‘ Ah !
 ‘ Edwin, I have seen and remarked the
 ‘ chief cause of all your pains, and Heaven
 ‘ knows how keenly I have regretted that
 ‘ it was not in my power to make thee blest,
 ‘ ---and at the same time bless myself, by
 ‘ having such a relative.

‘ But since a higher Power hath other-
 ‘ wise ordained it, I bow submissively :---
 ‘ still, let us forget that we were not born
 ‘ akin ; Edwin, you must leave this place,
 ‘ ——’tis the nursery of your cares.---Come
 ‘ to my arms, poor youth ! let me press
 ‘ you to my heart, and let not your gal-
 ‘ lant noble nature deny me the title of
 ‘ brother !’---(Edwin, totally overpowered,
 fell weeping on the bosom of Sir Morcar).
 ‘ From this hour, Edwin, I mean to protect
 ‘ you as my brother,---live, live to ennoble
 ‘ your valiant race ! You must to De Mow-
 ‘ bray Castle with me ; and these papers,’
 (continued Sir Morcar, drawing a packet
 from his breast, and his hand trembling
 with

with generous agitation), ‘ these papers are
 ‘ the deeds of the Castle of Montaigne,
 ‘ which the Monarch has restored to you
 ‘ at my request, together with your honour,
 ‘ your titles, and your name !’---

‘ May God and all the Saints and Angels
 ‘ repay thee, noble Mowbray, for I cannot !’
 —Edwin, enraptured and exhausted by his
 feelings, fell senseless at his feet.

Alarmed at the effects of his joy, Sir
 Morcar called loudly for assistance, when
 Sir Aymer de Valance entered ; they with
 difficulty restored him, when Sir Morcar, to
 avoid the expressions of his gratitude, fled
 his apartment.

The banquet was sumptuous, each coun-
 tenance glowed with joy and happiness.—
 The minstrels’ harps rung around, the song
 of revelry was high, and late was it ere they
 retired for the night.

‘ To-morrow, my Adela,’ (cried the en-
 raptured De Mowbray, as he pressed her
 hand

hand to his lips), ' to-morrow, this valued gift is mine for ever! '---

The blushing maid cast down her lovely eyes, but gently returned his pressure as she withdrew ; while Augustine hung speechless upon the bosom of Stanley, and gently sighed---

' Oh God ! were but poor Eliss here ! '

It was late when the guests of Ethelburga retired to repose ; but Sir Philip had still much to settle for the following day's nuptials, and he remained reading some papers with Lord de Warrenne, concerning the settlements of the young people, for nearly three hours. As they were retiring for the night, they were alarmed by a loud noise, and presently listening, heard footsteps stealing cautiously along the gallery : this gallery divided the apartments of the Warden from those of Sir Eustace, and, save Father Bertrand and the esquires, no one resided on this side of the Castle.

' 'Tis

‘ ‘Tis extraordinary !’ (cried Sir Philip),
 ‘ but some one must be up already for the
 ‘ day.’

But the dawn had scarcely broke ; the day seemed dull and misty, and a slight drizzling rain beat against Sir Philip’s narrow windows. He now took the lamp from the table, and was accompanying the Baron to his apartments, when an exclamation of surprise burst from them both, as they saw coming down the passage, Sir Eustace with his sword drawn, his face pale and disordered, and his clothes and sword bloody.---His clothes evidently had not been off.---

‘ Good God ! Sir Eustace,’ (cried the Warden), ‘ how do I find you thus ?’---

Eustace spoke not,---his eyes were wild, and his appearance altogether so confused, that Sir Philip led him to his chamber, and again demanded the occasion of his strange appearance.

‘ I know not !’---(cried Eustace), ‘ ‘tis
 ‘ some

‘ some supernatural power I do not comprehend,---but I have been attacked in my chamber, by some person who has diligently eluded my grasp.---I could not secure them !’---

‘ Attacked in your chamber !’---(cried the astonished chieftains), ‘ let us instantly alarm the Castle.’---

‘ Hold !’---(cried Eustace), ‘ I fear your efforts will be vain,---I do not believe it was a human being who attacked me !’

‘ Not human !’ (cried Sir Philip).

‘ No.’ (replied Eustace) ‘ I cannot explain to you, my feelings are too much agitated.---I shall return to my apartment to-night ; to-morrow all will be explained. But I would advise you, silently to see if the Castle is secure ; I would not disturb any one, for, I repeat it, I do not believe it was a human being.’---

Lord de Warrenne smiled at this assurance.---

‘ It is my belief,’ (said he) ‘ that your
‘ imagi-

‘ imagination has conjured up a ghost, you
 ‘ have in fancy attacked it, wounded your-
 ‘ self, and thus blooded all your apparel.’

Eustace now looked down, and shuddered as he viewed his bloody vestments.

‘ This is astonishing !’ (he cried), ‘ but
 ‘ may I request as a favour, that you will
 ‘ not mention this scene to-morrow,---there
 ‘ is a tale annexed to it, that I would feign
 ‘ conceal awhile.’

He was urgent in his request, and Sir Philip promised obedience. They searched the Castle ; all, however, was in tranquillity ; and Fitz Aubrey at length began to agree with the Baron, that Eustace had combated with a phantom his own imagination had created, and, smiling upon the youth, they retired to repose.

The morn was ushered in by sounds of triumphant joy. The Chapel was richly strewn with flowers, a path of velvet led the way to the altar, embroidered with gold initials of the happy names.---Father Ber-
 trand

trand and the attendant priests were enrobed in splendid attire. Ethelburga decorated the lovely tresses of Adela with jewels intermixed with pearls and roses, and attired her lovely form in robes of snowy white, a zone of brilliants encircling her waist. — Augustine was decorated with pearls and myrtle. — Never did lovely brides look more bewitching !

Already were the guests in the Chapel, the organ sounded in loud peals, and the priests had performed two masses, — Stanley, in bridal robes, had pressed his Augustine to his breast, and stood prepared to lead her to the altar. — Sir Philip anxiously awaited De Mowbray, whose absence had dressed the countenance of Adela with concern, and flushed the Baron's honest cheek with red. —

‘ Where can my cousin be ? ’ (cried the smiling Ethelburga).

When loud and repeated cries burst through the Castle !!!

Sir

Sir Philip rushed from the Chapel, followed by a numerous train, and Adela, overcome with dread, sunk senseless in the trembling arms of Ethelburga.——

But what were the feelings of Fitz Aubrey, on rushing into the room of De Mowbray, to meet many attendants with wild and enhorror'd countenances—and when he arrived at the bed-room, to find the noble chieftain violently dragged from his couch, and long since dead!!—A hundred ghastly wounds disfigured his manly form, and the room was clotted with the congealed current of life, which had been drawn from his bosom.

A cry of dismay and grief almost burst the heart of Fitz Aubrey, and he fell over the cold corpse inanimate, and by him the enfeebled and senseless Edwin; while Eustace, kneeling distractedly by the departed chieftain, pressed one of the cold bloody hands to his lips, and remained the image of despair.

‘ Almighty

‘Almighty God!’ (exclaimed the horror-stricken Baron of Elfwold), ‘how has this
 ‘villanous deed been perpetrated? Let the
 ‘Castle gates be instantly closed, and let
 ‘not a soul from them depart.’

‘Where is Sir Edwert?’ cried Eustace, and directing inquiry to be made, he was found with Fitz Bertrand deeply locked in slumber, and apparently overcome by some soporific power.

‘The flower of chivalry! the honour of
 ‘human nature! the friend of the helpless!
 ‘the protector of the innocent! thou art
 ‘no more!—where again shall we look for
 ‘thy equal?—where shall we find a soul so
 ‘noble, and a heart so kind? So brave, so
 ‘pious, so tender, wert thou, Mowbray!’—cried the mourning Eustace, as he clasped his lifeless hand,—then lifting his eyes to heaven, he shuddered, and inwardly muttered,—

‘And I, senseless that I was, perhaps
 ‘could

‘ could have saved thee,—but I did it
‘ not.’—

Stanley, Etheired, and the Baron, gazed on Eustace in surprise ; but his sorrow was too sacred, too solemn, to be intruded on : they gazed in silence.

At length Sir Philip and Edwin were recovered, and the murdered chieftain was laid upon his bed. His wounds seemed indeed manifold,—two had pierced his heart, and he was covered with others,—his bed was bathed in blood, and his own sword was likewise bloody.

‘ One of these wounds at any time would
‘ cut short the thread of life !’—cried the sorrowing Bertrand, as he examined them ; while Sir Philip looked on the corpse, whose countenance was distorted by pain and violent despair : at length he rushed to the bed,—a dagger caught his eye,—he gazed on the handle for a moment with surprise and agony, and then cried out—

‘ Almighty God, ’tis Eustace’s !’——

Eustace,

Eustace, who lay with his lips pressed to Sir Morcar's hand, at this exclamation started up, and fixing his eyes upon the fatal weapon, cried---

‘ ’Tis mine ! ’tis mine indeed ! given me
‘ too by this dear departed--- !’

Each eye was turned upon him in horror and amazement ; Sir Philip gazed frantic ;--but the pious Abbot, examining the dirk bloody and cold, saw the suspicions that reigned around, and calmly said,---

‘ ’Tis Eustace's indeed !—a proof itself
‘ that he is innocent ! some monstrous vil-
‘ lain, thus to screen himself, hath caused
‘ this dagger to be here.’---

‘ Innocent ! innocent !’---(cried Eustace, in a voice that would have touched the hardest heart),--- ‘ Oh God ! and need I
‘ any proof to speak me guiltless of so foul
‘ a deed !——I---I---who would have wil-
‘ lingly laid down my life, to spare his
‘ heart one pang of sorrow !---I---I thought
‘ guilty

‘ guilty of De Mowbray’s murder !—am
‘ I awake?’——

And he looked around with a frenzied glance, appealing in dumb eloquence to the hearts of all,---who with one accord pronounced him innocent.

‘ Oh! De Mowbray!’ (he cried), ‘ if
‘ thy blest spirit hovers round thy cold
‘ unburied corpse, pronounce thy friend,
‘ thy Eustace, loved thee dearer than his
‘ life!’---

Chap. II.

" Fingal was sad for Carthon ;
" He commanded the bards to mark the day
" When shadowy autumn return'd."

Ossian.

For one week after this fatal event, the gallant, the magnanimous De Mowbray lay in state. Each heart throbbed with the most painful sensations,---each step was slow and silent,—each countenance, dark and overcast, bore the picture of that deep regret which accompanied the hero to the tomb.

Dark and lowering was the morn of that day, fated to witness the interment of the chieftain. The gay wreaths which had adorned

adorned the Chapel to celebrate his nuptials, yet remained, dead and faded around its massy pillars,---no tongue had found utterance to command their removal!—no hand had dared profane those trophies sacred to De Mowbray! They had withered around the columns of the arches, emblems of the chieftain's faded form.

Loud swelled the anthem! as the venerable Father Bertrand, at the head of the Benedictine Monks, approached. The superb coffin was borne by Stanley Fitz Aubrey, Sir Vortimer de Warrenne, Lord de Lucy, and his cousin. His esquires bore his arms, followed as chief mourner by the Baroness, supported by Augustine d'Aubigny, her heart swelling with the violent emotions of her grief. Rosalie and Agnes followed her. Sir Philip Fitz Aubrey, whose arms were crossed upon his breast, and whose countenance, pale and ghastly, was bent upon the ground; where despair and horror seemed to have fixed

an

an all-powerful and everlasting seal. Edwin, supported on one side by Eustace, on the other by Sir Ethelred of Mont Rose, was followed by the aged Baron, and a numerous train of nobles and knights in sable plumes and scarfs.

As the procession approached the altar, loud peals of thunder mingled in the chorus, and added to the awful solemnity of the scene.

Dirge:

Round valiant Morcar's silent tomb,
 Let strains of deep regret arise,
 And waft our sorrows to the skies,
 For the young chieftain's hapless doom.

{ Peace to thy soul, oh Hero!
 { Peace to the soul of the brave!

Chaunt his deeds of matchless worth,
 Which truth and feeling ever sway'd,
 And oft the conqueror's stroke delay'd:
 Virtue adorn'd him from his birth.

{ Peace to thy soul, mighty Hero!
 { Peace! Hero of thy race.

Matchless

Matchless the Warrior's graceful form,
 Now cold and silent in the tomb.
 Matchless the Warrior's dreadful doom,
 Whose heart each virtue did adorn.

{ Peace to thy soul, brave Mowbray !
 { Hero of thy race.

Let us bedew with tears his urn,
 Let each sigh to him be given ;
 Chaunting the Warrior's just return
 Unto the peaceful realms of Heaven.

{ Peace to thy soul, mighty Hero !
 { Peace to the soul of the brave !

Slowly died away the organ's mournful
 peals upon the air, the voices gradually
 lessened their powers, and at length sunk
 into one awful uninterrupted silence.—
 Father Bertrand, entranced in his own
 grief, hung o'er the the tomb, and stillness
 reigned around---each form, each tongue
 inanimate !

At length the organ once more swelled
 its breast, and sent forth sighs of melan-

choly harmony ! the coffin was placed within the tomb—when a wild and piercing shriek burst from the distant recesses of the Chapel, and Adela, her lovely form pale and disordered, madness beaming from her azure eye and depicted in every gesture, rushed forward. She flew to the tomb, and wildly tore the pall from off the coffin.

‘ Morcar ! Morcar ! why come ye not ? (cried the distracted maid) ‘ Morcar ! am I not thy bride ? Why dost thou not take me to thy bosom ? - - - ’ Then looking round on the weeping spectators with a keen inquiring glance, she said with quickness— ‘ Are these your wedding robes ? How dark ! Where is Ethelburga ? Where is my Father ? ’—The coffin now seemed to attract her attention, she gazed on it for a moment in deep attention then with a loud appalling shriek flew to it and clasping it in her arms, fell senseless.

The heart-stricken Baron de Warrenne
had

had in vain endeavoured to approach the lovely maniac ; the sight was too much for the feeling heart of the fond father, and sinking in the arms of Sir Philip Fitz Aubrey, hid his grey hairs in his pitying bosom. But Sir Vortimer had caught her in his trembling arms, and bathed her frenzied countenance with a shower of tears.

‘ Oh my poor sister !’ (cried the afflicted youth, as he pressed her to his throbbing bosom) ‘ great was your loss indeed ! But ‘ oh ! my Adela, look at our venerable Father - - -’ His voice was almost inarticulate—Adela heard him not—Reason, the divine light of reason, had disappeared, and she submitted without a struggle to be placed in the arms of her attendants, and to be conveyed from the Chapel.

The lovely afflicted group of mourners placed near the altar, consisted of the Baroness, whose elegant figure distinguished her from her friends, Augustine, Rosalie, and Agnes. They were clad in sable robes

with long gauzy veils, which flowed in graceful drapery around their forms.—That youth, whose dignified though depending attitude distinguishes him from the other knights, and who supports on his arm the fragile and fainting form of Lord Edwin Montague,—that inimitable youth is Eustace!—his dark eye has long held the brimming tears, which now roll indignant of restraint down his pale cheek, his brow is contracted, and a slight emotion of horror is mingled with his regret.

Sir Ethelred, who stands beside him, regards him with looks of affectionate compassion and sorrow. De Lucy casts on him many a pitying glance, but curiosity and a slight cast of suspicion is mingled with it.—Stanley Fitz Aubrey and De Dunstaville are solemn and downcast, and Sir Durant Fitz Osborne, the least afflicted, seems the most observant of them all. The manly form of Sir Philip with difficulty supports the aged Baron sinking under an accumulation

cumulation of sorrow.---while Sir Edgar of Northwood, in whose countenance regret and sorrow seem mingled with indignation, stands regarding his lord with looks of reverence and solicitude !

The Chapel was now enveloped in gloom, excepting when the vivid flashes of lightning partially illumined it, and played around the groups of mourners, and the loud thunders rendered even at times the swell of the organ unintelligible. The coffin was now placed in the tomb, sobs were distinctly heard in the intervals of the loud storm, when a dreadful clap of thunder seemed to shake the stout walls of the Castle ; Ethelburga shrieked, and each heart for a moment ceased to throb, when the tomb of Lord Falconberg gave up its dead, and the departed hero, bright in his arms, appeared awfully conspicuous !!!

He regarded the assembly with a stern and awful air ; on Fitz Aubrey he cast a
solemn

solemn and grief-stricken glance, he waved his hand thrice, pointing to Sir Eustace with an eager glance, then o'er the tomb of Morcar, and having pronounced awfully 'Murder!' vanished in the gaping jaws of his tomb.

Astonishment and consternation for a time interrupted the ceremony; at length the tumult subsided, and the tomb was closed upon the corpse of the brave and noble chieftain for ever!

Slowly Ethelburga quitted the Chapel; as her veil was wafted between the arches, the heart of Sir Eustace died within his bosom. — He now led Edwin from the Chapel; scarcely however had he passed the door, when Sir Leonard de Falconris approached him.

'Pardon me, Sir Eustace,' (he cried) 'but you must resign Lord Edwin Montague—you must depart with me.—'

Eustace started; his meaning was too well understood, he looked around for Sir Philip,

Philip, he was there ;—but his pale cheek and quivering lip, — the anguish which was written in his expressive face, at once determined Eustace on his mode of conduct.

‘ My dear Edwin,’ (he softly said) ‘ I must resign you for a time to Sir Ethelred—but I will see you soon.’

Edwin fell upon his neck and wept :—
‘ Oh Eustace, Eustace, do not leave me !
‘ —Cruel Fitz Aubrey !’—

But Sir Eustace, who could not support his entreaties, had given him over to Mont Rose, and, bowing to Sir Philip with a glance that pierced his heart, said to Sir Leonard—

‘ I follow you !’

When Fitz Aubrey saw him turn from him, he could no more restrain his feelings, he rushed after him ; but a proud repelling glance from Eustace’s speaking eyes, arrested his steps, and he saw him no more.

‘ Good

‘ Good God, Philip,’ (cried young Stanley) ‘ there surely was not any neccessity for this :—hospitality, honour, forbids it.’

‘ Torture me not, my brother !’—cried Sir Philip in a voice of agony, as he burst from the surrounding knights, and flew to his own apartments.

Eustace in silence, but with a bursting heart, followed the steps of Sir Leonard, who descended with him into the vaulted passages of the Castle. His feelings were too powerful to permit him to remark his way, but hearing heavy footsteps behind him, he turned and perceived himself followed by a strong guard. His manly heart rose high within his breast, and a fiery glance of indignation shot from his eyes.

‘ This was ill judged, Fitz Aubrey,’--- (he said) ‘ you have yet to learn a lesson of forbearance and confidence from a Fitz Arnulf.’

They now arrived at the bottom of a
flight

flight of steps, which ascending they entered a handsome hall, but well secured on all sides.

‘ What part of Wolfnorth am I going to, Sir Leonard?’ asked Eustace.

‘ To the state prisons in King William’s Tower, my Lord.—I would ask pardon, Sir, for the unpleasant task now put upon me, did I not know that your generous nature rendered it unnecessary:—but I have orders to render your situation as comfortable as possible, express but your wishes and they shall be obeyed.—Ah, Sir! you know not how hard is this task to Sir Philip Fitz Aubrey; ’tis cruel necessity, not inclination, that urges the deed.’

Eustace replied not, his feelings were too complicated, too mingled, to admit of definition; he sighed to think his destined prison was so far from Ethelburga, and his frame trembled with an accumulation of sorrow, when he considered the stigma

now affixed to his character. A noble suite of apartments were allotted him ; they differed in no way from those he had been accustomed to, save that there was a more gloomy appearance of grandeur about them, and that they were completely secured on every side by bars and bolts of iron. Sir Leonard, whose deportment was both respectful and attentive, having inquired his commands, retired, and left him to himself, well imagining that solitude was the best soother of a mind so agitated with painful sensations.

When the door closed, the massy bars were locked upon him, and Eustace for the first time in his life found himself a prisoner ; a guard was stationed in the vestibule leading to his room, whose heavy foot was plainly heard as he kept his melancholy watch. Eustace, whose feelings were overcome by the novelty of his situation, threw himself upon the black velvet

velvet sofa, and, locked in astonishment and concern, sunk into deep reflection.

At length half starting from his seat, he cried :——

‘ Good God !----Why am I here ?---A
 ‘ prisoner ! - - - - Oh man ! ought ye to
 ‘ possess the power to punish, when ye
 ‘ judge so weakly ? - - - - Thy murder,
 ‘ Mowbray !---thy murder !---revered friend
 ‘ of my heart ! kinsman of my adored
 ‘ Ethelburga ! and is it possible that I
 ‘ should, by a strange coincidence of cir-
 ‘ cumstances, be under confinement at Wolf-
 ‘ north, and for the murder of De Mow-
 ‘ bray ?’ - - - - Tears, in spite of the in-
 ‘ dignation of his soul, burst from him as
 he continued, ‘ Alas ! my friend, my dear
 ‘ departed Morcar, how are my vain en-
 ‘ deavours for your happiness repaid ?—
 ‘ Was it for this I bled by your side and
 ‘ guarded with my shield your bosom, ex-
 ‘ posed to the shafts of your remorseless
 ‘ foes ? Oh ! my Ethelburga ! I—I attack
 ‘ the

‘ the precious life of your relative ! spill
 ‘ the blood of De Mowbray ! Oh Ethel-
 ‘ burga !—Ethelburga !’

His head drooped upon his heaving bosom, and tears bedewed the glittering eagle on his breast-plate.

From this attitude, he was aroused by the sound of a trumpet at the southern gate,---he started, but was sinking again into thought, when a louder blast struck his attention, and chilled the circling blood around his heart,---he darted from his seat, and flying to the window, struck his clenched hand with violence against his forehead, and cried in a voice smothered by passion---

‘ Fitz Alwy ! now dost thou indeed
 ‘ triumph,---but shalt thou triumph long ?
 ‘ - - - -’

For Fitz Alwy, with his gaily decorated train, appeared in the court, and passing beneath the window of the imprisoned Sir Eustace, he entered the Castle.

‘ Now

‘ Now, now,’ (cried the frantic youth),
 ‘ you press the hand of Ethelburga,—you
 ‘ gaze upon her! you hear the music of
 ‘ her tongue!--and she, smiling on thee,
 ‘ casts not a thought on Eustace, or, if a
 ‘ thought intrude, ’tis accompanied with
 ‘ horror and aversion for him, as the mur-
 ‘ derer of De Mowbray!’---

He paced his room with quick emphatic step, his cheek now flushed with agitation, his eyes darting the fiercest fires, which the tears that involuntarily filled them, in vain endeavoured to quench,---his state was dreadful! and the powers of his mind were thrown into anarchy, from the violence of his sufferings. At length the voice of Sir Ethelred, speaking to the centinel, who paced without his door, aroused him,---his door was unclosed, and the affectionate youths rushed into each other’s arms.

‘ Oh my Eustace!’ (cried Mont Rose, his feelings dying his cheek with crimson),
 ‘ Oh my Eustace! what an error is Fitz
 ‘ Aubrey

‘Aubrey committing!’---But Eustace inattentive seized his hand, and gazing in his face with phrenzy in his eyes, cried with the voice of Stentor,---

‘Fitz Alwy is here!’---

Mont Rose now observed the position of his windows, and his generous heart in a moment conceived all the tortures of his friend,—quickly he subjoined—

‘But not with Ethelburga!’—Eustace’s countenance relaxed its frown, while Mont Rose continued,—

‘She has refused to see him, nor does he know of your confinement.’

Sir Eustace, at this information, became tranquil, the last flood of tears streamed down his cheek, he seated himself by Ethelred, who thus subjoined,—

‘Mont Eagle asked for you,—the agitation of Sir Philip was great, but he replied that you were indisposed.’---

‘Does Ethelburga’---falteringly interrupted Eustace, he would have added—

‘know

‘ know of my imprisonment ?’ but his tongue refused utterance.

‘ The Baroness is totally unconscious of your situation,’ (hastily returned Sir Ethelred): ‘ Fitz Aubrey wishes to spare her the knowledge, and indeed he is right,---it would reflect no honour upon him,---it would’---

‘ Hold!’ (cried Sir Eustace): ‘ be not, my friend, too hasty to condemn Fitz Aubrey,---you are not aware of all the mysterious circumstances which have given rise to these suspicions.’ He now related the strange situation in which he was found on the night of the murder, by Sir Philip and the Baron de Warrenne,---he waved, however, explaining the whole to Sir Ethelred, saying, he wished to reserve the elucidation, until he was called upon to defend his character, when he thus continued,---

‘ There is yet another circumstance,
‘ Mont

' Mont Rose, more extraordinary even
 ' than these.---After they had discovered the
 ' murder of De Mowbray, Sir Philip order-
 ' ed a strict scrutiny to be made of the
 ' rooms and passages adjoining De Mow-
 ' bray's, and they perceived a track of con-
 ' gealed blood, leading from his room to
 ' mine, and the marks of bloody hands
 ' upon the walls. How my dagger came
 ' to be used, I cannot imagine; or how
 ' obtained---'tis altogether so strange:
 ' but, start not, Mont Rose, I doubt if I
 ' shall ever be able to clear myself from
 ' these suspicions.'

Long did they converse upon this strange
 event, when they were interrupted by Ed-
 gar, who throwing himself at the feet of
 Sir Eustace, cried in tones of anguish,
 while he bathed them with tears.---

' Oh! my beloved master! is this the
 ' return made to you for all your services?'

' Console yourself my dear Edgar,' (af-
 fectionately

fectionately replied Eustace), ' the mistake will soon be rectified, and my innocence appear.'

' Appear !' (loudly cried Edgar, as he started on his feet with a look of generous indignation), ' degenerate hearts ! which cannot distinguish virtue like thine own.'

Soon the trampling of horses was heard in the courts, and Sir Eustace had the satisfaction to see Fitz Alwy depart,---he marked his angered and inflamed look, as with haughty deportment he turned away from the Castle.

The agony suffered by Sir Philip Fitz Aubrey, had at length overpowered his health ; he was seized with a frenzy fever, that confined him to his bed ; his sufferings pierced the heart of Ethelburga ; he raved of Eustace, declaring him innocent, and ordering him to be released from confinement. Ethelburga knew not whether to consider this as the wild dream of delirium ; but when she reflected on the improbability

bability of the tale that had been told her, with respect to Eustace's seclusion, her heart took alarm, and she yielded to despondency. Rosalie and Agnes had departed with the luckless Adela to Elfwold, and to Augustine the unhappy Baroness told her sorrows.

From this hour, the most melancholy ideas possessed her fancy, and burying her thoughts from all but Augustine, her sole delight was in wandering round the Castle, either alone, or attended by Sir Aymer de Valance, whose mildness and sweet simplicity of disposition had endeared him particularly to the Baroness. She had wandered one day with him and Augustine around the terraces, when she expressed a particular wish to view the south side; she seldom walked there, but Sir Aymer now unclosed the last postern, and on turning an angle of the Castle, King William's tower was before her. As she advanced, sounds of sweet and plaintive music struck upon her
ear ;

ear ; she listened, and turning to Sir Aymer, asked if any prisoners were in the tower : at this inquiry he started, and felt the imprudence he had committed, in suffering her to approach the Prison Tower.— He however replied, that he believed Fitz Godwin of Alnwick had been removed there, and requested her return. Ethelburga's heart had taken the alarm, and as she continued to approach the tower, the full harmonious tones of Eustace, now more touching from the melancholy pathos of his song, flowed upon the air.—The sad conviction of his situation rushed upon her mind ; she gazed earnestly at Sir Aymer, and faintly articulated, —

‘ Alas ! do not deceive me, is not Sir ‘ Eustace—’ a prisoner, she would have added,—but tears choked her utterance, grief impeded her speech. At this moment the melancholy youth approached the window ! An air of dignified sorrow increased the graces of his person ; innocence and
conscious

conscious virtue were conspicuous in his countenance, which was pale and languid, rendered more interesting from the glossy curls of his dark hair, which was blown negligently around it.

The moment his eye caught the figure of Ethelburga, he started, and a glow of crimson suffused his cheek,—he leaned against the window-frame for support, and had not, if he wished it, the power to move. The situation of Ethelburga was still more cruel; her heart had already flown to him, which doubted not a moment of his innocence,—but she dared not notice him in his present situation.—Sir Aymer, who loved and pitied Eustace sincerely, bowed to him; Eustace, pleased with his attention, returned it with a smile; Augustine kindly kissed her hand. What could Ethelburga do? She could not wound his feelings by marked neglect, but, with a throbbing heart, cast her eyes upon him, and faintly saluted him.—The
action

action was indeterminate, but the look which accompanied it, was not so. Eustace, agitated in the extreme, gracefully bowed, gratitude was written in his countenance, which beamed with melancholy delight.

They retraced their steps in silence: as Ethelburga turned the angle of the building, again she looked back; Eustace yet leaned against the window-frame, mournfully regarding her; a tear glistened in her dark eye, as she falteringly addressed Sir Aymer.

‘ Good heavens ! it is impossible that
 ‘ Sir Eustace can have shed the blood of
 ‘ poor Morcar !’

‘ It is impossible to imagine it, I think,’
 (returned Sir Aymer)—‘ his imprisonment
 ‘ was a mere form, which has been unfor-
 ‘ tunately prolonged by the indisposition of
 ‘ Fitz Aubrey.’

‘ Whence arose these suspicions ?’ asked
 the Baroness.

‘ I

CHAP. III.

"Pale is the lovely cheek, the look of which was firm in danger! Why hast thou failed on our hills, thou fairer than the beams of the sun!"

Ossian.

At length Sir Philip Fitz Aubrey, after a melancholy confinement, was sufficiently recovered to attend the examination of Sir Eustace. A court was called in the hall of the Castle, and the Warden took the throne.

Lord Edwin Montague had insisted on being carried from his room, (to which he was, now, alas! confined, and in the last stage of life) to the hall, that he might be present at the painful trial of his esteemed friend,

friend, and listen to his defence. All the knights were now assembled, and waited only for the presence of Sir Eustace. Soon he appeared—his air, his demeanour, was calm and dignified ; his countenance was pale, from confinement and grief ; but the cast of woe it generally wore, had now given place to an expression of haughty and conscious innocence. He approached the throne with a firm and majestic step, and bowed to Fitz Aubrey with an easy grace, free from either malice or anger.

Sir Philip, at the sight of him, was extremely agitated; he explained to the knights in faltering tones the reason of the confinement of Lord Fitz Arnulf, and described the strange manner and appearance of the young accused, on the night of De Mowbray's murder ; to this, the Baron De Warrenne reluctantly bore evidence. He then produced a note, found in the chamber of the departed, warning De Mowbray to beware of the silver eagle, and likewise produced

another, which he said he had since received; the vile scrawl was as follows:—

“ You hesitate to convict the worthless Fitz Arnulf of the murder of De Mowbray? hesitate no more.—There are those now in the Castle, who could bear witness it was done by him, and whom *he* would have seduced to have participated in the dreadful deed”---

‘ Good God !’ (interrupted the astonished Eustace), ‘ how false ! how villanous !’--- Sir Philip continued,---

“ I will explain this seemingly mysterious action. Lord Fitz Arnulf hath long lifted his eye to the Baroness of Falconberg, and has even found means to prejudice her heart in his favour.” (The cheek of Eustace flushed, a soft trembling seized his frame, and he felt at that triumphant moment almost repaid for all his sufferings); “ In order to obtain your own, and the gallant Morcar’s assent, he has performed all those valiant actions which won the
“ Chieftain’s

“ Chieftain’s gratitude and affection. But
 “ you have yet to learn, that having served
 “ him, as the warrior thought, beyond the
 “ power of recompence, he asked him, in re-
 “ turn,---the Lady Ethelburga’s hand ! Yes,
 “ he dared raise his wishes e’en so high ! to
 “ grasp the almost sceptred power of Fal-
 “ conberg.”

‘ So help me God !’ (exclaimed the
 astonished Eustace), ‘ ’tis false—false as
 ‘ the tales of Fabul ! Never—no, never—
 ‘ did I urge such a request to the departed
 ‘ Chieftain.’—Sir Philip continued,---

“ But De Moubray was too well ac-
 “ quainted with the will of the late
 “ Lord Falconberg,---too sensible of Lord
 “ Fitz Alwy’s claims, to yield even to the
 “ insinuating voice of Sir Eustace ; and he
 “ replied, by regretting that he had urged
 “ him to declare, that that was a request
 “ which he could never grant. Then
 “ Lord Fitz Arnulf, urged by disappointed
 “ love and ambition, swore a solemn oath,

“ to take the Chieftain’s life,---a solemn
 “ oath!---Now dost thou doubt, Fitz Au-
 “ brey, of his guilt? Recall to your mind
 “ the strange events which attended the
 “ murder:---Who but *he* could infuse the
 “ soporific potion into the beverage of De
 “ Dunstaville?—who but *he* could enter
 “ unobserved into the apartment of the
 “ chieftain?—his dagger left ~~there~~ ^{there}!—his
 “ unsettled appearance, when you and
 “ Lord De Warrenne met him!—Ask him
 “ an explanation!—and mark the weak
 “ fiction that he will tell thee; believe
 “ him, if thou canst,---but heed the warn-
 “ ing voice of a friend to the House of
 “ Falconberg.”

‘ Horrid composition!’ (exclaimed the
 wonder-struck Eustace, as he gazed around,
 marking the effect it had made upon his
 auditors). Sir Philip rose, and spoke in
 tremulous, and at the same time anxious
 tones:—

‘ I must positively declare, that my
 ‘ opinion

‘ opinion concerning this scrawl is favoura-
 ‘ ble to Lord Fitz Arnulf. The assertion
 ‘ of an anonymous accuser should always
 ‘ be received with caution.—Why does he
 ‘ not face the accused openly, and appear
 ‘ that decisive witness against him, which
 ‘ he declares himself to be? It is not
 ‘ through a wish to spare Lord Fitz Ar-
 ‘ nulf, for there is a virulence in this paper,
 ‘ which plainly bespeaks him an enemy,
 ‘ and a bitter one. Besides, if the Knight
 ‘ had made such a demand to De Mow-
 ‘ bray, I am almost confident, that chief-
 ‘ tain would have made it known to me;
 ‘ and yet, he never breathed the slightest
 ‘ hint of such a circumstance, or cooled in
 ‘ the least degree his good opinion of Sir
 ‘ Eustace. The writer of this billet says—
 ‘ “ Who but he could enter the apartment of
 ‘ “ the chieftain ?”—And at the same time,
 ‘ ’tis evident, that he, whoe’er he may be,
 ‘ could *himself* enter, not only his apart-
 ‘ ment, but mine also, and place this billet
 ‘ there.

‘ there.—And it is my opinion, *he* is more
 ‘ likely to have committed the dreadful
 ‘ deed, than Sir Eustace Fitz Arnulf.

‘ But, finally, the writer of this paper
 ‘ knows *too much*. How was he to obtain
 ‘ the knowledge of Fitz Arnulf’s request
 ‘ to De Mowbray, and the oath he relates
 ‘ to have followed? I conceive, such a
 ‘ conversation not to have passed in the
 ‘ presence of witnesses, or in the open field.
 ‘ How was he to know the exact situation
 ‘ I found Sir Eustace in, on the night of the
 ‘ murder, unless himself abroad? and if so,
 ‘ for what purpose? And lastly, how should
 ‘ he be acquainted with what passed in
 ‘ Eustace’s chamber, unless himself were
 ‘ there? There is an amphibology in the
 ‘ whole, which in my mind tends to acquit
 ‘ the young noble.’

A murmur of applause answered him ;
 and Lord de Warrenne declared, that his
 explanation had dispelled every atom of
 doubt from his mind.—

‘ And

‘ And I’ (said De Lucy) ‘ would turn
 ‘ my indignation from the injured hero,
 ‘ to the writer of that scrawl ; for there
 ‘ lieth the treachery.’

Each knight agreed with De Lucy : Eustace was affected by the eager testimonies they manifested of their confidence and regard ; and he felt infinitely grateful to Sir Philip, for the kind and unprejudiced manner, in which he had judged his cause.

‘ But now,’ (continued the Warden),
 ‘ there remains for Sir Eustace, to explain
 ‘ away the reason of his situation. — I am
 ‘ prepared for a tale of wonder, but I in-
 ‘ treat you, my Lord, that no dread of
 ‘ ridicule will prevent your relating every
 ‘ thing that passed ; and I must add, that,
 ‘ however strange it may be, I do not believe
 ‘ there is one amongst us, who is not fully
 ‘ satisfied that you are incapable of telling
 ‘ a falsehood.’

Eustace bowed to the good Fitz Aubrey,
 — he stepped forward, and commenced his
 justifi-

justification with somewhat of an embarrassed air :—The crime of which he stood accused,—the virulence of his accuser,—the place,—the judges---all contributed to overwhelm him with a momentary confusion ; but as he spoke, his voice grew energetic ; his countenance and manner acquired all their wonted dignity and determined expression, and his tones inspired his hearers with confidence and conviction.

‘ I appear before you in so strange a
 ‘ situation,---a situation so unmerited,---
 ‘ for a crime, at the bare idea of which my
 ‘ nature shudders,---that I feel infinitely
 ‘ perplexed in what manner to address you.
 ‘ But from the generous and ingenuous
 ‘ manner in which Sir Philip Fitz Aubrey
 ‘ has judged both me and my accuser, I do
 ‘ not fear being able to complete my justification. At the same time, I must allow,
 ‘ the strangeness of my tale will try the
 ‘ credulity of my auditors ; and I can only
 ‘ endeavour to convince them, by pledging
 ‘ the

‘ the unblemished honour of a Knight, to
 ‘ be faithful and sincere in my relation.

‘ I must commence by intreating you to
 ‘ believe, that no conversation ever occurred,
 ‘ of the nature mentioned in that accursed
 ‘ scrawl, between me and the departed
 ‘ chieftain; for whom I have retained the
 ‘ truest esteem, and the sincerest regard :
 ‘ gratitude for his kindness to me bound
 ‘ me to him, and I call on the blessed
 ‘ Saviour of Mankind to witness, I would
 ‘ at any time have yielded up my life to
 ‘ preserve that of him, for whose murder
 ‘ I now stand arraigned.’

A look of thorough confidence from the
 Knights encouraged him to proceed.

‘ On the night this dreadful deed took
 ‘ place, I had attended my friend Edwin
 ‘ Montague, until within an hour of the
 ‘ time Sir Philip saw me; and conse-
 ‘ quently had not taken off my clothes.
 ‘ When I returned to my apartment,
 ‘ my mind was agitated, and I felt re-

'luctant to retire to my bed. As I quit-
 'ted Edwin's room, I thought I heard
 'a slight noise and a groan; I listened,
 'but the silence not being again interrupt-
 'ed, I believed it to be an error of my ima-
 'gination, and passed on. Alas! perhaps
 'at that moment the dreadful deed was
 'perpetrating, and I might have saved
 'him!—I sat for some time in deep
 'thought, till suddenly a hollow sound in
 'my chamber occasioned me to start and
 'look around; my lamp burned so feebly
 'I could scarcely distinguish any thing, and
 'I rose to trim it—when suddenly ap-
 'peared in a distant corner of the room an
 'armed figure, a lambent flame surround-
 'ed it, and it was stained with blood.
 'Alas! I have been too often visited by
 'such a spectre to feel either fear or sur-
 'prise—it haunts me day and night—alas!
 'too justly, I fear.'

Horror and grief were depicted in the
 countenance of Eustace; Sir Philip under-
 stood

stood his allusion, and sighed, but cast upon him a glance of kindness and encouragement. The young Knight continued—

‘ I addressed what I believed to be the
 ‘ vision; it answered me not, at length it
 ‘ beckoned with its shadowy hand: I fol-
 ‘ lowed it I scarcely know where, but in a
 ‘ few moments I perceived it had a drawn
 ‘ sword, with which it suddenly attacked
 ‘ me; I drew my sword and encountered
 ‘ it, but soon found I had another adver-
 ‘ sary behind me; I now fought my way
 ‘ back again to my chamber, the spirit (or
 ‘ rather what I had believed to be one)
 ‘ still followed me, when, a noise being
 ‘ heard, it suddenly vanished.

‘ I now hesitated what course to pursue,
 ‘ when a slight cut in the back proved that
 ‘ I was yet assailed; I turned to defend
 ‘ myself, and pursued my adversary even
 ‘ into the passage, where however I lost it.
 ‘ I wandered about for some time, but at
 ‘ length at the extreme end of the passage

‘ I

‘ I saw the spirit, its vizor was drawn
 ‘ down—Now a door clapped to—the figure
 ‘ fled, and I was following, when I met
 ‘ Sir Philip and the Baron de Warrenne. .

‘ But I have since had reason to be
 ‘ assured that no common adversaries at-
 ‘ tacked me, by this stud which I found in
 ‘ my room, evidently fallen from some bril-
 ‘ liant suit of armour.’

Eustace presented a richly-embossed silver rose, which was evidently broken from some coat of mail ; the Knights each examined it, and Sir Philip begged permission to retain it.

‘ This strange tale’ (continued Eustace)
 ‘ is all I have to offer in explanation of my
 ‘ appearance, and which no one can think
 ‘ more extraordinary than myself. As to
 ‘ the dagger, I call upon Edgar of North-
 ‘ wood, to declare that it was laid out in
 ‘ my dressing-room on the evening previous
 ‘ to the murder, with a new suit of apparel
 ‘ to wear at the ceremony, and the fol-
 ‘ lowing

‘ lowing morning we missed it ere I descended.’

Edgar stepped forward, and solemnly declared, that he himself put it out for the purpose, and missed it with surprise on the morning.

‘ Your relation, Lord Fitz Arnulf, is certainly marvellous ; but notwithstanding, I yield you implicit belief : nor shall I hesitate in three days time from this to acquit you, unless further proofs of your supposed guilt should be obtained. That you have a secret enemy, is very apparent —do you suspect—or can you point out who that enemy is ?’

‘ No, Sir Philip, that I cannot ; I am unconscious of having an enemy within this Castle’s walls.’

Lord Edwin Montague now desired to be heard—his voice was scarcely audible, inarticulate and weak ; he spoke with difficulty ; his chair was led forward, and he addressed Sir Philip :—

‘ There

‘ There is a circumstance which may
 ‘ tend to exculpate my dear friend, which I
 ‘ shall mention. After he had left my
 ‘ apartment, I plainly heard a noise in the
 ‘ adjoining passage ; my attendants slept,
 ‘ and I was too feeble to awake them ; it
 ‘ was a strange confused sound, first with-
 ‘ in, and then I am sure without the Castle:
 ‘ and it struck me to come from that part
 ‘ of the Castle where Sir Morcar and my-
 ‘ self once saw two figures disappear—You,
 ‘ Sir Durant Fitz Osborne, must have in-
 ‘ deed slept soundly not to be awakened
 ‘ by the noise, for it was close to your
 ‘ door.’

‘ Ah !’——exclaimed Eustace starting
 back, and fixing his penetrating glance
 upon Fitz Osborne’s face, in which he was
 followed by Sir Philip as well as the rest of
 the Knights present, who keenly regarded
 him : little change, however, was visible,
 and he answered calmly, ‘ I heard them
 ‘ not.’ Some of the Knights thought
 they

they perceived some agitation in his countenance, but Eustace exonerated him from the charge his heart a moment before had laid upon him. Edwin, however, seemed not so easily satisfied: the calm air of Sir Durant agitated his weak frame; a flush for a moment painted with the most brilliant and exquisite tints his sallow cheek; he essayed to open his lips, the effort however was vain, exhausted he fell back in his chair, Eustace drew near him, Edwin grasped his hand, he raised his heavy eye to his face in fond and affectionate solicitude, and at length found utterance. The scene was so deeply affecting that not a sound disturbed the still air; Eustace's soul trembled with deep emotion.

‘ Oh my Eustace!’ (he sighed) ‘ beware
 ‘ of secret, of disguised enemies—from
 ‘ open ones you have nought to fear:
 ‘ they well know that, and would stab you
 ‘ in the dark—treacherously, alas! my day
 ‘ is gone—few are my remaining hours;
 ‘ yet

‘ yet I would even pray they could be prolonged, that I might be enabled once more to wield the sword in thy defence, that I might prove my gratitude and love.’

He raised his sweet purple eyes to heaven; Eustace kissed his pale hands in silence.

‘ Ah me, Fitz Aubrey ! two suns more do not set o’er my head—am I to be deprived of my Eustace, my dear, my valued friend ? alas ! shall I not have the comfort of dying on his bosom ?’

Eustace, as he ceased, raised his weeping head, and fixed his gaze upon the haggard countenance of his friend—Pride and insulted dignity was forgotten, as he bent his knee to Fitz Aubrey, and cried—

‘ Grant the request of my Edwin, ’tis all I ask.’

The good Warden, unable to control his feelings, his breast heaving with the most tremulous passion, could no longer restrain a flood of burning tears ; he raised
Eustace,

Eustace, and wringing his hands hung over Edwin—

‘ My dear boy, my Edwin !’ (he cried)
‘ talk not so—Eustace shall attend you, he
‘ shall not quit your side.’

‘ Ever so kind, my cousin !’ (replied Edwin as he pressed his hand.)

Sir Philip Fitz Aubrey now gave orders to Sir Leonard de Falconris, that Eustace should be attended to the apartment of Edwin, and for form sake alone two guards were stationed without the door.

Life faded each hour in the sinking frame of Montague ; and the too perceptible changes in his person were accompanied with such horrible appearances, that the afflicted Father Bertrand pronounced beyond a doubt that he was poisoned.

Eustace left not his side, and Edwin appeared to breathe more freely when reclined upon his breast. Towards evening he complained of a burning pain around
his

his heart, but to all Father Bertrand's solicitations to examine his side he made a positive opposition.

The sufferings of this lovely youth all night were very great, and those of his afflicted friend scarcely less; each groan that anguish wrung from the bosom of De Montague, pierced the heart of Eustace with the keenest agony, and the scene altogether was too afflicting to endure.

In the morning he sunk into a calm slumber, and rested upon Fitz Arnulf's breast, from which he would not remove: Bertrand, who was most tenderly attached to the expiring youth, knelt by his bed-side with clasped hands—the priest was evidently forgotten in the relative; his venerable countenance was distorted by anguish, and all the parent was in his heart as he watched with steadfast horror the fading features of the yet beauteous Edwin Montague. Sir Philip had retired, unable to support the scene; and Ethelred, as he
watched

watched the despair pictured on the countenance of Eustace, felt his own, however great, too insignificant to intrude upon him.

Nothing could be more mournful, more prophetic of death, than the awful scene in Edwin's tower: the rooms looked cold and gloomy; the autumn winds whistled around his tower, and the yellow leaves of a few solitary trees drifted through the open casement; a small fire scarcely illumined the wide hearth, and his high narrow purple bed, adorned with dark plumes, gave an air of dreadful solemnity to the scene, which was still more painfully increased by the winds ever and anon sweeping the cords of Edwin's harp, which hung up to the wall, and producing the wildest and most melancholy sounds.'

He slept till the sun was begining to set in the sky, then awoke with a wild shriek—

‘ My heart-strings have snapped ! ’——(he cried and gasped for breath)—— ‘ ’Tis o’er,—
‘ ’tis

' 'tis o'er——'tis nearly o'er!—— Oh Ber-
'trand, dear Father——'

The agonizing Friar presented him a
potion, which with difficulty he swallowed ;
he then pressed his hand to his heart.——

' It beats no more——oh ! did you
' not hear the sturdy cords how hard they
' were to break !—Oh my Eustace, the an-
' guish' - - - -

He could say no more: alarmed, Fitz
Arnulf cried—' He's dead !—alas ! he's
' dead !'

But Edwin, after a short pause, lifted up
his head, and softly murmured—' Ethelbur-
' ga !—Fitz Aubrey ! - - - -'

Mont Rose flew from the apartment to
Sir Philip, and prayed him to bring the
Baroness to Edwin's dying bed. Tenderly
did he break to her the cruel intelligence
of the danger her favourite was in, and
make known to her his request ;—a flood
of tears burst from her lovely eyes, and she
cried--

' Alas !

‘ Alas ! poor Edwin ! oh let me fly to
 ‘ him---let him not be denied any thing.’

But when she entered the melancholy chamber, the scene almost overpowered her --- Edwin, the gentle Edwin, lay supported on the breast of Eustace, who pale and haggard, tears trickling down his cheeks, hung over him : the once inimitable form of Edwin now a mere skeleton, a ghastly paleness was o’er his skin, sunken and dark was his eye, and his features were already contracted by the hand of death. The Abbot yet knelt by his bed-side, and in fancy gazed upon the breath that left his lips.

When Ethelburga entered, Mont Rose and Stanley, with De Lucy, withdrew ; Eustace would have followed, but Edwin would not part with him ; it was a cruel scene for Ethelburga, she had not seen Eustace since he had appeared at the window of the prison chamber. Trembling she approached, and fell on her knees at the other side of Edwin’s bed, and concealing

cealing her face in her hands sobbed aloud. Edwin gazed for a moment in silent rapture.

‘Heaven, I thank thee!’ (he faintly uttered) ‘and is my only hope gratified? shall I breathe my last sigh in the presence of Ethelburga?’ (he fell back) ‘A cordial, dear father: - - - I - - I have yet much to say.’

Father Bertrand poured a cordial down his throat---after a few moments of slight agitation, he again raised his head: his face was covered with a cold moisture, but his voice, though hollow and deep, was steady.

‘Death, death, my Ethelburga, levels all distinctions---Pride will not be offended by the expression of love---nor does timidity longer compel my silence---You, Eustace, by my death will be prevented from making that sacrifice of your feelings which you otherwise would have done---Then, know the cherished secret
‘ of

‘ of my heart---I love---I adore Ethel-
 ‘ burga!’ - - - -

Eustace started from his position, he gazed on Edwin in agony---what a scene was opened to his view ! all became known to him, and the greatness and goodness of his friend’s heart was manifest---a deep groan burst from his breast at this conviction.

‘ Nay, be not afflicted, my Eustace,’ (murmured the dying youth): ‘ what could have
 ‘ been the result, had I told thee sooner ?
 ‘ Pity would have prevented your making
 ‘ me your confident, and I should have
 ‘ been robbed of making thee the sweetest
 ‘ gift of my life - - - for, oh my friend !
 ‘ next to possessing the heart of Ethelbur-
 ‘ ga myself, it is my only joy to see it
 ‘ wholly yours - - - - Yes, Ethelburga !
 ‘ first, and only love ! dear mistress of my
 ‘ youthful heart---beam of my life’ - - - he
 laid his head for a moment upon the bosom
 of Eustace,---a loud convulsive sob broke
 from

from Ethelburga ; at length she rose, and pressed him in her trembling arms ; Eustace resigned him to her, and falling on his knees, cried to her---

‘ Oh Ethelburga ! whisper comfort to the dear expiring youth, or I die in madness !’---and Eustace’s convulsive agonies became so great, they awoke the fleeting spirit of Montague.

‘ Dear, Eustace, embitter not my last moments, by the sight of such despair---
 ‘ Dear friend ! how inestimable has been your kind attention to me !’-----then, raising his eyes tenderly to Ethelburga, on whose breast he reclined—‘ My love ! spirit of my soul ! how fondly and how faithfully have I cherished your adored image !
 ‘ By the love I have borne thee---I adjure thee, Ethelburga, slight not the passion of my Eustace ; his equal is not in this world !—Give me your hands)---Eustace, Ethelburga, be you united’ - - (he joined their hands, and cast a supplicating glance upon
 upon

upon Sir Philip) ; ‘ yet, Eustace, I have to
 ‘ crave your pardon, I have sadly wronged
 ‘ you, - - - Father, - - - Fitz Aubrey, - - - your
 ‘ pardon - - - but *you, Eustace*, I have will-
 ‘ ingly deprived of a gift, that well I know
 ‘ would have made you blest indeed---but
 ‘ Ethelred gave it me, kind youth ! it hath
 ‘ been a treasure never for a moment parted
 ‘ from my heart - - - I now bequeath it to
 ‘ you, Eustace.’ - - - -

He gently raised himself, and, loosing his robe, drew from his alabaster bosom the fatal medal.—‘ Almighty God !’—cried Father Bertrand, as he riveted his eyes upon the bosom of Edwin, slightly disfigured with faint purple spots ; when the aged Friar fell convulsed on the bed ;—the agitation caused by this seemed at once to stop the course of Edwin’s life, a cold trembling came over him, Eustace arose and closed his arms round him.—For a moment the lovely spectre lifted up his sweet

eyes to God, and breathed a fervent prayer - - - - -

‘ Fitz Aubrey ! dear Fitz Aubrey, farewell !—— Eustace, my friend !—— Ethelburga ! - - -oh Ethel--bur--ga !! I--I’ he gasped for breath to finish the sentence ; Eustace felt the cold dew of death upon his forehead---his eyes were closed---he fell heavy in their arms.——‘The soul of Edwin Montague had fled to the realms of bliss ! - - - - -

At this moment, a wild and melancholy strain swept o’er the cords of the poor boy’s harp---it seemed the airy chorus of spirits, welcoming their angelic companion into the heavenly choir :---Eustace---Ethelburga---breathed not---moved not---every nerve seemed palsied, every sense seemed numbed.

Father Bertrand now recovered ; he rose, and dashed the medal from the hand of Eustace, and gazed upon the corpse in wild despair, and groaned forth ---‘ Poor
‘ *murdered*

‘ *murdered boy !* - - - - thou sacrifice to
 ‘ love - - - and art thou gone ?---Ethelred
 ‘ *your friend*---your *murderer*---misera-
 ‘ ble young man ! may he ever remain
 ‘ unconscious of the deed !----- Stare not
 ‘ at me, my friends, nor think me mad
 ‘ ---That accursed gift is deadly, deadly
 ‘ poison, and was equally the death of Ed-
 ‘ win, and Lord Falconberg !’----

Eustace heard no more---a wild shriek
 from Ethelburga wrung his soul to mad-
 ness---the corpse dropped from his arms !---

CHAP. IV.

“ But Carthon stood in his grief;
“ He mourn’d the fallen Colmar slain in youth,
“ Before his fame arose.”

Ossian.

‘ARE you determined to visit the corpse this night, Reverend Father?’---said Eustace, as he observed the Abbot with melancholy step enter the dressing-room.

‘Yes, my son,’ (mournfully returned the Friar, as he seated himself by his side, and cast a glance of agony into the bed-room of the departed Edwin, whose door stood open), ‘If I have imagined right, the body
‘ will be in so dreadful a state of putrefac-
‘ tion to-morrow, that it will be impossible
‘ to approach it: the mixture of metals
‘ in

‘ in the medal, leaves no room to doubt,
 ‘ that they are of so noxious a quality to the
 ‘ human frame, that no subject could long
 ‘ survive the effect of their application to
 ‘ the breast. What have you learnt from
 ‘ Sir Ethelred, concerning his obtaining
 ‘ this medal ?’

‘ Enough, I fear, to substantiate the dread-
 ‘ ful fact,---that De Wilton was well aware
 ‘ of its pernicious qualities, and gave it
 ‘ for the purpose of poisoning our luckless
 ‘ Edwin.’

‘ Or thee, my son,---for I think it likely,
 ‘ that was his intention.’

Sir Eustace recounted the whole trans-
 action, and ended by saying,---‘ I did not
 ‘ wish to ask too many questions of poor
 ‘ Mont Rose ; for I am certain, had he the
 ‘ least idea of the truth, he would be for
 ‘ ever miserable.’

‘ ’Tis all unveiled,’---(returned Father
 Bertrand, as Sir Philip entered), ‘ De Wil-
 ‘ ton, who gave the metallic poison to
 ‘ Lord

‘ Lord Falconberg, knew well he could not
 ‘ long survive it,---he recognized the medal
 ‘ on the bosom of Fitz Alwy, and took
 ‘ the fatal gift from him, to give for the
 ‘ destruction of either Eustace, or poor
 ‘ Edwin.——Fitz Alwy’s sudden illness,---
 ‘ nay, his sudden recovery, now is accounted
 ‘ for.’——

‘ Yes, yes,’ (returned Sir Philip), ‘ the
 ‘ monstrous machinations of De Wilton
 ‘ are every way visible. --- All-gracious
 ‘ Power ! when will thy retributive hand
 ‘ be put forth to exterminate from the
 ‘ world, this race of murderers ?’

‘ Father Bertrand now took the lamp,
 and approached Edwin’s bed ;---the heart of
 Eustace sickened.---

‘ Father,’ (he said), ‘ is it necessary that
 ‘ I should be present?’

‘ I wish it,’ (returned the Friar) ; ‘ there
 ‘ is nothing, my son, that can appall thy
 ‘ nature :--little, ah ! little will be requisite,--
 ‘ the signs will be too apparent. —Go thee
 ‘ to

‘ to my oratory, and bring Father Clement ;
‘ all are now retired to repose.’

Eustace looked wistfully at Sir Philip, and then replied,—‘ Father, you forget
‘ that I am a prisoner.’

Sir Philip turned, and seizing his hand, burst into tears.

‘ No, Eustace---you are so no longer, I
‘ will accompany you.’

They soon returned with the venerable Clement. On entering Edwin’s chamber, richly illuminated with tapers, and strewn with flowers, they found Father Bertrand in prayers beside the corpse, and silently kneeling, they joined him at his melancholy office. Presently they arose, and proceeded to examine the corpse ; with a trembling hand, the Abbot removed the covering from the face, and disclosed the horrible sight of his countenance, ghastly, bloated, and covered thick with purple spots.

‘ Without hesitation ;’ (said Father Clement),

ment), 'I pronounce, that this unfortunate
' young man's death was caused by the
' most malignant poison.'

' There is no doubt it was that monstrous
' composition,' (returned Father Bertrand).

' None,' (replied Clement), ' and were
' I to give my opinion, the Chieftain of
' Mont Eagle is accessory to his murder ;
' too well, I fear, he knows the powers of
' poison : I met Sebastian some time since,
' with a bundle of the most pernicious
' herbage in his hand, and on my remark-
' ing it with some surprise, he replied
' with a ghastly smile, that they were
' necessary for a very simple chemical pre-
' paration—besides, I *know* Fitz Alwy to
' be a villain.'

Sir Philip gazed in earnest horror upon
the Monk.—' How, Father ! do you assert
' so seriously, this dreadful fact ? whence
' do you derive your knowledge ?'

' That, my son, I am partly bound not to
' tell ;—but my oath is only upon certain
' points,

‘ points, and the rest I will very willingly
 ‘ relate to you.’

The corpse of Edwin was now covered ;
 Father Bertrand remained beside it in
 prayer ; while Sir Philip, requesting the
 venerable Friar to satisfy his curiosity, sat
 down in the dressing-room with Eustace,
 and he related the following events :—

‘ It is now some time since I was sur-
 ‘ prised in my monastery, by a visit from
 ‘ Fitz Alwy ; ’tis true, I was his confessor,
 ‘ but he troubled me so little, that I scarcely
 ‘ knew any of his actions. I had long
 ‘ found it vain to advise him, for he ridiculed
 ‘ my intreaties, and laughed at the penances
 ‘ which I enjoined him to perform. When
 ‘ he paid me this unexpected visit, he said
 ‘ he came to beg me to perform for him the
 ‘ the ceremony of marriage at Mont Eagle,
 ‘ and bound me by a solemn promise, not to
 ‘ reveal the transaction ; but on my finding,
 ‘ from various interrogatories, that the
 ‘ marriage was to be forced on his in-

' tended bride, I refused to perform the
 ' ceremony. He left me in evident anger,
 ' and as he departed, Sebastian, but lately
 ' become a brother of our convent, entered ;
 ' he demanded from me, the reason of the
 ' chieftain's rage, and I informed him. It
 ' was now that this new brother betrayed all
 ' the diabolical blackness of his heart ; he
 ' laughed at my scruples, and declared that
 ' he would perform the ceremony for Fitz
 ' Alwy. He departed ; I know not whether
 ' he *did* perform the ceremony, but I rather
 ' think so, for I never have seen that chieftain
 ' since, and a few days saw Sebastian settled
 ' at Mont Eagle, in the capacity of Con-
 ' fessor to the Baron. To my inquiries
 ' he never would reply, but from what I
 ' have since heard, I shrewdly suspect Fitz
 ' Alwy,—not death—robbed Lord de Lucy
 ' of his lovely sister, and the luckless Sir
 ' Eliss of his intended bride :—The Earl
 ' of Wilton had charge of her, during
 ' her brother's absence, and I overheard
 ' Sir

‘ Sir Hildebrand declare, that the hardest
 ‘ job he ever had, was carrying off the Lady
 ‘ from Lord Wilton’s.’

‘ Heavens !’ (exclaimed the horror-struck
 Fitz Aubrey), ‘ what became of his wife ?—
 ‘ how can he then wed my Ethelburga ? or
 ‘ is she no more ?’—

‘ If Lord Mont Eagle wished to wed
 ‘ the Baroness,—his luckless Lady soon
 ‘ would be removed,’ (returned Father
 Clement); ‘ his conscience, his heart, for
 ‘ so young a man, are dark beyond the
 ‘ powers of imagination to conceive,—I
 ‘ believe him capable of any crime.’

Sir Philip Fitz Aubrey had enveloped
 himself in deep reflections, ever and anon
 a palsied shuddering, a start of horror,
 proved his ruminations to be of the most
 painful nature. Father Clement departed
 to his rooms. Eustace sat up with the
 Warden, the whole of the night, watching
 the corpse of his friend, and sometimes
 joining in prayer with the aged Abbot.

The

The following morning proved the words of Father Bertrand but too true: the body quickly approached to the most dangerous state of putrefaction, and it was hastily committed to the tomb.—

Ethelburga wept over the ill-fated youth,—his story, and his death, were equally melancholy. Eustace pressed his lips to the cold marble which enclosed him: Father Bertrand was too much afflicted to perform the sad rites,—he had dearly loved the interesting boy, aye! even as his own,—and Clement performed the solemn ceremony.

Who can describe the feelings of the distracted Ethelburga,—or the dreadful ideas excited by the certainty of the murder of her father, and Edwin?—Sir Philip in vain urged to her, that the distempered brain of Bertrand had caused him to utter these expressions; but Ethelburga was not to be again deceived, and the regrets which possessed her heart were so bitter,
the

the death of Edwin so melancholy, so horrible ! that her young mind, unable to support the anguish these events had created, sunk into despondency, and her health fell a victim to the excess of her sufferings.

No sooner was the last sad ceremony performed for Edwin, than Sir Eustace prepared to depart for Elfwold ; although fully acquitted by Sir Philip of the crime imputed to him, yet he keenly felt the unpleasant surmises that might be harboured against him, in every eye he thought he read doubt and suspicion, and his indignant heart spurned the accusation. In vain did his friends endeavour to soothe the tumult of his soul, his feelings had been too far violated—his character too far blasted, for him ever to regain his peace of mind :—and the loss of Edwin Montague, together with the decease of De Mowbray, put the finishing blow to his misery ; and he determined to seek an end to his sorrows amidst the tumults of war and bloodshed.

When

When Sir Philip (now Fitz Aubrey, Lord Montague) heard his determination to depart, he tried to dissuade him from his purpose; and expressing to him, how fully convinced he was of his worth and innocence, intreated him to make Wolfnorth his home.—But he spoke to a soul of fire!—Eustace thanked him with gratitude, but never for a moment faltered in the dignity of his refusal. Ethelburga—her idea could alone unman his heart, for when he thought of parting from her, his anguish was indeed great. The fatal day at length arrived, and he ventured to request permission to take, perhaps, an everlasting farewell of her. It was granted him.—and pale, emaciated, and absorbed in melancholy, he found the lovely maid. She was in tears, her fair head reclined upon her hand, and her beautiful form enrobed in sable garments; she endeavoured to smile as he approached,—but the effort was vain, and concealing her face in her handkerchief, deep

deep and agonized sobs broke from her bosom.

Eustace bent his knee to the mistress of his soul, vain however were his endeavours, to form the accents of his faltering tongue, —grief impeded his speech,—tears gushed from his eyes, and sighs and murmurs alone found utterance! At length recovering some degree of composure, he said—

‘ Lady, I come to bid you farewell,—may
 ‘ I cherish the hope that you will not re-
 ‘ member me with abhorrence? May I be-
 ‘ lieve, that the being whom you have
 ‘ honoured by your kindness, is exonerated
 ‘ in your mind from that dreadful crime,
 ‘ once laid to his charge?’

‘ Oh Eustace!’ (exclaimed the afflicted Ethelburga), ‘ never---never for one mo-
 ‘ ment did I believe you capable of so
 ‘ foul a deed!’

‘ Then, Lady, I am indeed satisfied.—I
 ‘ shall depart; but I shall bear with me
 ‘ the sweet consolation, of knowing that
 ‘ Ethelburga

‘ Ethelburga does not remember me with
 ‘ horror—alas ! the only consolation left
 ‘ for the most wretched of God’s created
 ‘ beings. Will Ethelburga pardon me for
 ‘ declaring, that her image will be for ever
 ‘ before my eyes,--that the tender recollection
 ‘ of her, will soothe the rough path of my
 ‘ wayward fate ?—my adoration for her,
 ‘ be the comfort and solace of my mi-
 ‘ serable heart, --- a heart which will only
 ‘ lose the smallest particle of its fond love,
 ‘ or waver in its faith, when death has
 ‘ taken from it the power of feeling,—can
 ‘ Ethelburga forgive me ?’

‘ Forgive you ! Eustace—ah, Heaven !
 ‘ what an expression to make use of to me !
 ‘ Your affection,—the pure love of your
 ‘ noble and delicate mind, will be the sole
 ‘ delight of my mind ! Yes, Eustace,
 ‘ agony robs my lips of the power of false-
 ‘ hood, nor will I deny the affection I
 ‘ feel for you. Go, Eustace, but with thee
 ‘ bear my undivided heart ! To the spirit of
 ‘ my

‘ my father I appeal, to exonerate me from
 ‘ blame: it shall be my pride to own, that
 ‘ thou, Eustace, art the hero of my soul!’—

‘ Ethelburga! *my* love! *my* Ethel-
 ‘ burga!’ (cried the enraptured Eustace,
 as, overcome by tenderness, he sunk at
 her feet). ‘ Then who shall not envy me
 ‘ my misfortunes, so repaid?—who shall
 ‘ know the affection with which I am dis-
 ‘ tinguished, and not acknowledge me the
 ‘ most blessed of human-kind?—Hear me,
 ‘ Ethelburga, while I swear by the Holy Re-
 ‘ deemer of mankind! that my faith to *thee*
 ‘ shall never for a moment relax, in thought,
 ‘ in word, in deed; and that the last breath
 ‘ these lips shall utter, shall be the wor-
 ‘ shipped name of Ethelburga.’ Having
 taken this solemn and affecting oath, he
 rose, and placed himself by her side. ‘ But
 ‘ ah! my love, how will my heart throb
 ‘ with anguish, when I remember, that
 ‘ this hand, perhaps in a short time, will
 ‘ be the property of Fitz Alwy?’

‘ Never,

‘ Never, my Eustace !’ (cried the Baroness, with firm emphatic voice, when tenderness gave place in her countenance to dignity and resolution). ‘ The pious Father Bertrand has exonerated me from the act, if repugnant to my heart, for—“ how, “ my child, can you profane the sacred “ altar of your God, by swearing to love “ and honour, one whom in your heart “ you hate !” said he. And here, Eustace, I swear, that if the will of my revered Father precludes my bestowing upon *thee* my hand, that I will dedicate the remainder of my days to God ! for he, and *he alone*, is worthy to replace thee in my heart.’

‘ Oh my loved mistress ! my tender faithful Ethelburga ! thou hast indeed blessed me ! My tongue cannot convey to thee, the sentiments of my heart,---a life of love and constancy can alone prove how much I love and honour thee !’—

At this moment Sir Philip entered: Eustace

stace raised his voice, and falteringly pronounced, 'Farewell!' — when Ethelburga drew from her lily neck a brilliant cross, which she presented to the youthful Knight. —

'Wear this for my sake, brave youth,' (she said); 'if e'er misfortune should have brought thee to despair—if e'er excess of joy or glory should tempt thee to extacy! gaze on this pledge of my affection, press the blessed emblem to thy heart — and remember, that piety and virtue are the bonds of love!'

Eustace imprinted a devout kiss upon the sacred gift,—once more he sunk upon his knees, bathed her hand with a hero's tears; and casting a look of mingled agony and adoration upon her, rushed from the apartment.

In the corridor, waited Lord de Lucy, Mont Rose, and Sir Vortimer de Warrenne: his heart was too full to speak to them, but making a sign for them to proceed,

proceed, he followed, and mounting his milk-white steed, cast a farewell glance at the venerable towers of Wolfnorth.

CHAP. V.

" Dreadful king, away !—

" Go to thy troubled dwelling, cloudy foe of the lovely !

" Let the stranger shun thee, thou gloomy in the hall !

Ossian.

WHILE these melancholy events were passing at Wolfnorth, Fitz Alwy harboured in his heart, the most inveterate enmity to the whole of its inhabitants : when he quitted Wolfnorth, on the arrival of Sir Morcar de Mowbray and his triumphant party from Redwald and Ravensthorpe, he secretly cursed the ill success of De Morthemer, and learnt his desperate situation with an indifference, which proved that

that the friendship he felt for him, was not of a very powerful or disinterested nature.

Gloomily he returned to his Castle of Mont Eagle, and, flying to his chamber, reposed in the bosom of Lord Ithona all his disappointments and his ill success.

It was during this conversation, that the most inhuman, barbarous scheme was proposed, and finally adjusted, that ever entered into the mind of man ! Sir Morcar's well-known attachment to Eustace, and abhorrence of Fitz Alwy, doomed him to the dreadful death he suffered ; and the death or ruin of Eustace was planned with the same facility as the murder. Fitz Alwy hoped, that by contriving to render him suspected of the crime, immediate revenge would have been taken by Fitz Aubrey ; he knew not the Warden's heart—the mercy, the justice, the tenderness of his nature, could not be understood by him. To put this plan in execution, there was little difficulty ; for an emissary of Fitz Alwy's dwelt in the Castle
of

of Wolfnorth, by whose aid he had before entered it unknown and unsuspected.

‘ The ghost of Osmond, which walketh
 ‘ in the Castle,’ (jeeringly said he to Ithona)
 ‘ will be for me a good disguise in which to
 ‘ perpetrate the deed ; and the young priest
 ‘ will kneel and tell his beads, while Bevis
 ‘ or thou shall send his soul to Heaven !’

And thus was this abominable plan carried into execution :—when midnight had passed, Fitz Alwy (whose armour had been previously prepared by Sebastian, with a combustible which emitted a blue light), with Lord Ithona, and Sir Bevis de Wilton, were admitted by their friend into the apartments adjoining De Mowbray’s, and occupied by Fitz Alwy when he slept at the Castle ; here awhile they rested, and the dagger of Eustace was presented to the Baron ; he, foremost in courage, now entered the chamber where the gallant Morcar, his heart panting for the coming morn, slept in undisturbed repose. A smile

was

was on his lip, and his heaving bosom bare beneath the dagger of Mont Eagle. For a moment the chieftain hesitated: hitherto, he had never stabbed the sleeping, the action seemed unknightly, and he was on the point of waking De Mowbray to defend himself, when that chieftain appeared disturbed,—not a moment was to be lost—Fitz Alwy darted forward, and plunged the dagger in his bosom!

The murdered hero uttered a deep groan, and sprung from his bed; but life was arrested ere he could precipitate himself from it, he fell on his face over the side, and in the same moment received the swords of the three other chieftains in his body—he died without a second groan.

Fitz Alwy, the beautiful Fitz Alwy! without a single pang of compunction, surveyed the ghastly corpse,—he gazed with malicious satisfaction on the young warrior now no more, whose virtues had rendered him obnoxious to the damned association.

Heartless

Heartless Fitz Alwy ! remorseless villain !—for as he gazed upon the lifeless form of the young chieftain, his lips curled with contempt, and he uttered in smothered tones—

‘ How, wouldst thou thwart my purposes, De Mowbray ?—Well had it been for thee hadst thou not been my foe !—Death now will enclose thee in its cold embrace, instead of the arms of thy lovely bride. Thus be ever awarded the vengeance of Mont Eagle !’

Ithona now reminded him, that one victim alone had as yet glutted his vengeance---and starting from his horrid contemplation, he followed the steps of his secret emissary ; that villain, that cool, determined, damned villain, who had crept into the guileless bosoms of the Falconbergs only to doom its cherished representatives to destruction ! He had discovered a secret passage that led into the room occupied by Eustace, and which

caused the supposed spirit to appear before the youth so suddenly. The plan, however, with regard to him was defeated owing to Sir Bevis de Wilton, who, appalled by the portrait of the late Lord Falconberg, which he took for his spectre, fell senseless in the arms of Ithona, and was obliged to be carried away. The secret emissary who attacked Eustace with Fitz Alwy, finding himself for a moment alone with him, fled in pursuit of his friends—and the Baron, bereft of a guide, was well nigh discovered by Eustace, who saw him at the end of the gallery; when he suddenly discovering a door leading to the secret passage, escaped the Castle, though not without Edwin Montague's hearing him depart.

Great was the rage and disappointment of the Baron, on hearing that Eustace had escaped the snare laid for him: his rage knew no bounds, and he loudly execrated his evil fortune. The imprisonment
of

of Eustace somewhat ameliorated his anger : he employed his secret emissary diligently in order to prejudice Sir Philip's mind against him ; but the wisdom of that knight rendered all his endeavours ineffectual.

On the day on which Eustace quitted Wolfnorth, Fitz Alwy was doomed to receive a dreadful and unexpected blow. His wanton extravagance and profusion had long been a topic of regret and terror to his needy friends, who marked his ruin approaching, and in his ruin saw their own. On this day, the Baron demanded of Hildebrand an enormous sum, when to his astonishment he thus replied :—

‘ My Lord, I have it not. Long have
 ‘ I warned you of your empty coffers, and
 ‘ begged of you to lessen your profusion, but
 ‘ you attended not to me. Gold has been
 ‘ squandered like the pebbles of the beach ;
 ‘ your castle, your tournaments, your re-
 ‘ tinue, your armies, are more splendid than
 E 2 ‘ you

‘ your Monarch’s—how can you support
 ‘ this extravagance?—Your people have
 ‘ had private taxes levied on them until
 ‘ they will till your land no more, the ruin
 ‘ long impending is come at last. I have
 ‘ not wherewithall to pay your troops, and
 ‘ years will not recover the vast wreck of
 ‘ fortune you have brought down upon
 ‘ yourself.’

‘ Confusion !’ (cried the enraged Baron,
 who never till now had known the refusal
 of a single wish) ‘ and is it come to this ?
 ‘ No longer can I trifle with a woman’s
 ‘ whims ; the vast possessions of Falcon-
 ‘ berg can alone fill up this breach.—
 ‘ My banner must wave over Wolfnorth’s
 ‘ haughty towers ! and that without de-
 ‘ lay !’—

‘ There spoke Mont Eagle,’ (said the
 triumphant Ithona, with a smile or rather
 grin of approbation) ‘ It has long been a
 ‘ subject of astonishment to me, why thou
 ‘ hast delayed so long thy purposes.

‘ Hadst

‘ Hadst thou ever *loved*, Ithona, the mystery would soon have been unravelled,’ (replied the chieftain dejectedly); ‘ spite of myself, I cannot divest my soul of the passion which consumes me for that woman!—and, ah! willingly would I prolong my unhappiness, to gain her willing heart;—will not enjoyment lose more than half its pleasures, if I know my bride has been compelled to my arms?’

‘ Worthy of Father Eustace!’ (replied Ithona, with a sneer.)

‘ No more!’---(cried Fitz Alwy starting up, fury flashing from his eyes,) ‘ no longer will I delay; to-morrow sees me once more a suppliant, and then—by hell! no more I’ll tamper. - - - The monk Ignatius---my heart sadly misgives me;---these beads and crucifixes have enervated his mind to woman’s weakness—I much fear he hath deceived me—as yet the cheek of Aubrey and the Abbot tell not the tale I wish - - -’

‘ ’Tis

‘ ’Tis well,—and will you suffer the old
‘ Priest to thwart your views ?’

‘ How can I prevent him ?’

‘ How !’—(cried Hontercombe with a
Satanic laugh, and he half unsheathed his
dagger.)

‘ What !’ (cried Fitz Alwy, who for the
first time shuddered at a crime) ‘ What !—

‘ murder my own - - - -’ (and he covered
his face with his hands, and turned away)—

‘ No, Ithona, *that* is too much :---surely

‘ no need of that---he cannot harm.’ They
separated ; each lost in thought and plot-
ting wickedness.

On the following day, Fitz Alwy at-
tended by his train arrived at Wolfnorth :
Sir Philip coldly received him, and Ethel-
burga, whom he had not seen since the
death of Edwin, could with difficulty con-
ceal her horror and disgust.

Who would have believed, in the fasci-
nating Baron of Mont Eagle, strode a
monster of wickedness and iniquity, a mur-
derer,

derer, and an atheist. Nothing could be more elegant than his figure, more bewitching, more seductive than his sweet countenance, or the tones of his mellifluous voice; his black expressive eyes animated by a soft and tender expression, or the melancholy smile which played around his ruby lips; the dignity, the haughty dignity of his step and air, and that confident garb of innocence which he could so well assume.

‘ At length, my Ethelburga.’ (exclaimed the chieftain, as undaunted by her repulsive air he threw himself beside her,) ‘ I come to claim my long—long-promised bride; mistress of my soul, too long has the period of my happiness been delayed by a series of unfortunate events; let not the crimes of my degenerate cousin pervert your heart from me, my love; let not the name of Eustace be remembered with that of Ethelmorne.’

A deep-drawn sigh from Ethelburga was her only reply; he continued: ‘ Sufficient
‘ time

‘ time has now been given to mourn the
 ‘ dead ;---no longer must my consort dress
 ‘ her face in tears, her lovely form in sa-
 ‘ ble robes ! now let the ardent kisses of
 ‘ love banish these drops of woe ! and
 ‘ bridal robes succeed these dusky gar-
 ‘ ments !’

‘ How, my Lord !’ (replied the somewhat
 haughty though trembling Baroness) ‘ is
 ‘ one poor month too long, in your esteem,
 ‘ to weep our dearest friends ?’ (Fitz Alwy
 was somewhat abashed) ‘ The hapless Ed-
 ‘ win Montague is scarcely cold in his grave,
 ‘ tears have not ceased to flow from every
 ‘ feeling heart—and would you wake the
 ‘ walls to sounds of revelry ?’

‘ Methinks the Baroness of Wolfnorth
 ‘ condescends too far, when she embalms
 ‘ with tears, the tomb of her Esquire.’

‘ Alas ! my Lord Mont Eagle, you
 ‘ know not half the virtues of Lord Edwin
 ‘ Montague—or, knowing them, have not
 ‘ justly appreciated their value !’

‘ Now

‘ Now by my troth, Ethelburga, this
 ‘ is more than I will support---a menial !
 ‘ taken into your Castle from motives of
 ‘ compassion, fed, clothed, and pampered,
 ‘ am I to hear the praise of your moulder-
 ‘ ing slave ? No, by Heaven ! I came here
 ‘ on another errand ; what day, what hour,
 ‘ am I to receive your hand ?---I will no
 ‘ longer play the woman’s fool !’

Ethelburga’s heart revolted from him,
 she shuddered, then gathering firmness
 thus addressed him :—

‘ My Lord, full well am I aware of the
 ‘ awful obligation laid upon me by my
 ‘ departed father,—full well am I deter-
 ‘ mined not to insult that father’s memory,
 ‘ by a wanton refusal to comply with his
 ‘ commands ; but there is yet a superior
 ‘ Power which must not be insulted, nor
 ‘ will I profane the sacred altar of the Bless-
 ‘ ed Redeemer of mankind, by swearing
 ‘ that which my heart can never feel !——
 ‘ Start not, my Lord, nor gaze thus ap-

‘ pallingly upon me ; my mind is resolutely
 ‘ fixed, and my heart is too ingenuous to
 ‘ deceive you. Hear me, Fitz Alwy—al-
 ‘ though I cannot bring my mind to fulfill
 ‘ my father’s will, yet I never wholly dis-
 ‘ regard it.—The world has no charms for
 ‘ me !—they are all faded !—lost !—gone
 ‘ by !’ (a tear dropped from her eyes.)—‘ In
 ‘ the cloister shall my heart alone find re-
 ‘ pose, in the service of my God, my only
 ‘ Lord !’ (Ethelburga crossed her hands
 upon her heart, and raised her soft ex-
 pressive eyes to heaven). ‘ The House
 ‘ of Falconberg will find a worthy repre-
 ‘ sentative in Lord Henry Murray, my
 ‘ nearest relative, and the cousin of my
 ‘ dear departed Morcar ; to him will I
 ‘ resign my honours and estates, and walk
 ‘ the path of peace in solitude, the surest
 ‘ road to Heaven !’——

‘ Never, by all the black infernal powers
 ‘ of hell !---never, I swear !’ (cried the im-
 passionate Baron, whose soul had been
 gradually

gradually inflaming to a dæmoniac pitch,
 during the words of Ethelburga). ‘ This
 ‘ comes of all thy plans of education, priest-
 ‘ ridden Lady !---What else could thy short-
 ‘ sighted father have expected, when he
 ‘ confided thy rearing to a mercenary
 ‘ churchman ? And the virtuous immaculate
 ‘ Fitz Aubrey too,---ah!---ah ! poor fool !
 ‘ ---hast thou been cheated, weak silly be-
 ‘ ing, couldst thou not see through the
 ‘ plans of the needy Knight ? You, Ethel-
 ‘ burga, Sir Philip hoped to rear thee for
 ‘ his own ; did he not place about thy per-
 ‘ son his stripling brat, to win thy foolish
 ‘ heart, and lisp “ Papa ” for ever in thy
 ‘ ear ?----Think you his specious manners
 ‘ and austere demeanour could hide from
 ‘ the world his admiration, the impas-
 ‘ sioned glances of his artful eyes ? He,
 ‘ in the pressure of the Saint, has oft
 ‘ felt more than half a man, and has al-
 ‘ ready, in his heated mind, grasped the
 ‘ sceptre of his weak ambition ; possessed

‘ the glittering spoils of Falconberg, and
 ‘ wedded his “ *dear daughter*.” (Fitz
 Alwy imitated Sir Philip’s gestures, and
 sneered in the most malicious manner.)
 ‘ Yes, ye —look not thus amazed : interest,
 ‘ sordid interest rules each action of that
 ‘ base ambitious man ; and now, fearing to
 ‘ confess his views while I live to chas-
 ‘ tise him, he joins with pious Bertrand in
 ‘ his holy frauds, to hide thee in a cloister,
 ‘ while he shall receive from your relative,
 ‘ Lord Murray, the purchase of his trea-
 ‘ chery.’

Fitz Alwy, overcome by rage, ceased :
 when Ethelburga, whose heart had nearly
 burst with indignation, clasped her hands
 and cried :---

‘ Oh Fitz Aubrey, Fitz Aubrey ! noble,
 ‘ generous man—and shall the child thy
 ‘ fostering hand has reared, hear thee thus
 ‘ defamed ?’

While she remained in this attitude,---
 Fitz Alwy pacing the room with hurried
 step,—

step,---the good Warden and father Bertrand entered : they were surprised at the scene, and more so when Ethelburga, at the sight of them, lifted up their hands to her lips, and kissing them fervently, burst into a flood of tears and quitted the apartment.

‘ My Lord,’ (exclaimed Sir Philip with a severe glance) ‘ how is it I find you thus ? What hath occurred to cause the tears of my Ethelburga ?’

Fitz Alwy, conscious that he had gone too far, yet paced the room in violent agitation, endeavouring to calm the transports of his soul, and smooth his ruffled brow, which now, spite of his beauty, was the dark, and too faithful picture of his heart.

‘ Sir Philip Fitz Aubrey may be calm,’ (he cried) ; ‘ he is not an insulted lover, a repudiated husband.—I came to claim my right---the hand of Ethelburga : but I received a firm, direct refusal. It
‘ now

‘ now remains for *thee*, Sir Philip Fitz
 ‘ Aubrey, if all thy boasted affection for
 ‘ the departed chieftain is sincere, to en-
 ‘ force the command of the late Lord Fal-
 ‘ conberg, and deliver up the haughty and
 ‘ misguided Baroness to my arms.’

‘ My affection, my Lord,’ (calmly re-
 turned Sir Philip) ‘ was never doubted, for
 ‘ the departed noble whom you name, and
 ‘ it shall be proved by the care I shall ever
 ‘ take to preserve my Ethelburga’s hap-
 ‘ piness. There is an obligation yet for *you*
 ‘ to perform ; that is, that you, my Lord
 ‘ Fitz Alwy, shall prove yourself justly
 ‘ worthy of the Baroness.’

‘ And prythee who is to be the judge ?’
 (returned Fitz Alwy, with a pointed and
 contemptuous sneer).

‘ The friends of Ethelburga,’ (returned
 the Warden).

‘ And whence, my Lord Montague, do
 ‘ you derive *your* right of disposing of the
 ‘ Baroness’s hand ? The will of Lord Fal-
 conberg,

‘ conberg, not Sir Philip Fitz Aubrey, is
 ‘ to be regarded, I should imagine—or
 ‘ perhaps the importance of the Baron of
 ‘ the Castle is lost in that of the High War-
 ‘ den!—However, you, and your august
 ‘ mistress seem equally to disregard it.’

‘ No, my Lord — my remaining here
 ‘ in disputation, holding a noisy converse
 ‘ with your insulting tongue, proves how
 ‘ great the regard I pay to the will of
 ‘ my departed friend. Were mine alone
 ‘ consulted, I frankly tell thee, the hand of
 ‘ Ethelburga never should be thine.’

This direct and open acknowledgment somewhat disconcerted Fitz Alwy; it was totally unexpected, but astonishment soon gave way to pride and passion, and he exclaimed tauntingly—

‘ When the Baron of Mont Eagle shall
 ‘ stoop to ask Fitz Aubrey’s consent, he
 ‘ may refuse! but I well know, insidious
 ‘ man, were thy will consulted, the hand
 ‘ of

‘ of Ethelburga—the power of Falconberg
 ‘ would become thine own.——I—I—’

‘ Hold, my Lord Mont Eagle, hold thy
 ‘ bold and false aspersions,’ (interrupted the
 offended Abbot) ‘ I will not see the fair un-
 ‘ spotted character of Lord Montague,
 the best of men, thus branded by the
 tongue of calumny. *I am a Falconberg.*’

(And as he spoke, all the native dignity of
 his house flashed from his expressive eyes).

‘ *I am the relative of Ethelburga—and I*
 ‘ can in a moment prove how base is thy
 ‘ bold assertion ; for I solemnly declare,
 ‘ so highly do I value the faithful attach-
 ‘ ment of Sir Philip Fitz Aubrey to my
 ‘ family, so greatly do I think of him, that
 ‘ willingly would I give him the hand of
 ‘ Ethelburga, had not the ill-advised will
 ‘ of my brother otherwise destined it. Had
 ‘ Fitz Aubrey ever expressed the slightest
 ‘ wish to have become the husband of the
 ‘ Baroness, it would have been the pride
 ‘ of

‘ of my race, the glory of our house, to receive the honour of an alliance with so brave and good a man.’—

Fitz Alwy’s heart nearly burst with malice, he replied only with a sneer, while Sir Philip, overcome with gratitude, cast upon the virtuous Priest a solemn and affecting glance; he then addressed Fitz Alwy:—

‘ No more, my Lord, let us debase ourselves thus by a war of words—actions, not sentiments, sincerely speak the m
‘ Before then we converse further upon the marriage, you must inform me what hath become of the Lady Emma de Lucy, your wife.’—

The ghastly hue of death o’erspread the countenance of the Baron—in a moment all the proud contemptuous manner he had assumed vanished into air, and the guilty victim of sin and terror stood confessed. Sir Philip regarded him for some time in stern silence; then, with shuddering sensations,

sations, cast down his eyes and uttered a deep groan. Fitz Alwy, suddenly recovering himself, found words :—

‘ How, or by whom this vile falsehood
 ‘ has been invented, I know not—nor shall
 ‘ I seek to know—it is beneath my notice.
 ‘ The paltry stratagem is too thinly veiled
 ‘ not to be evident to the slightest obser-
 ‘ vation, and I now tell thee, I will **not**
 ‘ brook delay ; I claim the hand of the
 ‘ Baroness as my right, and if thou dost
 ‘ not instantly resign it to me, *force shall*
 ‘ compel thee.’

‘ And I declare, my Lord Mont Eagle,
 ‘ that until you produce and prove a very
 ‘ satisfactory account of your former Lady,
 ‘ you enter no more these walls : I feel
 ‘ myself bound most solemnly to protect the
 ‘ person and happiness of the Baroness of
 ‘ Falconberg from all interruption ; and
 ‘ *you* will find that *I* shall strictly fulfill
 ‘ my duty.’

‘ I

‘ I parley then no more,’—(exclaimed the enraged Baron) ‘ by arms my right shall be obtained. And *thou*, ambitious man, mayst feel the satisfaction of having involved the vassalage of Wolfnorth in anarchy and warfare, destructive and ineffectual, for thou shalt not obtain thy wishes.’

‘ And you do *really*, my Lord, intend to bring an armed force against the Castle of Ethelburga ?’

‘ Most certainly I do—unless you deliver up my bride instantly to my arms.’

‘ Never, my Lord, until thou art proved guiltless of the numerous crimes laid to thy charge,’ (sternly replied the Abbot).

‘ Bring then thy forces, unfeeling man, I shall be prepared to meet them.’ (said Fitz Aubrey).

‘ Farewell !’ returned Fitz Alwy, with the most determined smile of triumph and derision, as he quitted the Castle of Wolfnorth,

north, and returned to Mont Eagle, his heart beating high with hopes of sanguinary revenge, and final triumph.

CHAP. VI.

“ His deeds passed from his soul of fire, like the rolling
Of vapours from the face of the wandering sun.
Not careless looked the blue eyes of Cluba on his stately steps.
In white bosoms rose the king of Selma,
In the midst of their thoughts by night.”

Ossian.

SIR Eustace pensively pursued his way from Wolfnorth, his heart beating with a variety of sensations, in which it would be difficult to say whether pain or pleasure were most predominant. When sighs broke from his bosom at the idea of his departure from Ethelburga, the recollection of her acknowledged affection, and the promise she had made him, gave birth to the sweetest sensations of rapture.

His friends rode silently, and at some
little

little distance by his side, and were observant of every change in his admirable countenance ; but there was a dignity ever attendant upon the sorrows of Eustace, which restrained the interruptions even of friendship, and at once commanded silence and veneration. Although so young, and surrounded by those in rank and fortune his superiors, there was a dignity of manner about him, a mild grandeur and reserve of character, which commanded attention, and insured respect ; it was a dignity of which he was totally unconscious, the chaste unadulterated dignity of nature, which exalted him imperceptibly and involuntarily above the rest of human kind. His friends at a distance admired and loved him, and looked up to him as one for whom, amongst all their fondest and most affectionate regards, they could not help feeling the utmost deference and devotion : but withall, his manners were so mild and musically tender, that you could not help asking

asking yourself whence arose this undefined feeling towards him, this mysterious impression of the soul. He appeared to endeavour by a heavenly sweetness of disposition to banish all distance and reserve, while at the same time this was the moment, of all others, when his superiority was more striking than ever. Perhaps it was the mingled recollection of those proud and haughty fires which flashed from his eyes, when either offended or insulted, or more than either, when he was witness to some cowardly action—perhaps it was the tone of his manly and expressive voice, which to the perpetrator of cruelty or oppression could command forbearance, and in tones which none dare disobey—from whatever cause it proceeded, nature had elevated him above his race, and ranked him as the monarch of her sons.

As they passed beneath the wooded cliffs of Mont Eagle, the young hero lifted up his eyes, and waving his sable plumes in
air,

air, cast upon them an indignant glance: but as he gained the eminence, the crimson banner of De Warrenne, floating on the top of its venerable towers, became visible, and he entered into converse with De Lucy and Sir Vortimer. On their approach, the Baron came out to meet them; his air was melancholy, and his venerable head, silvered o'er with age, seemed bent by distress, and cast down with woe. To their inquiries concerning the luckless Adela, he mournfully replied, that her reason had returned, but had brought with it such poignant sufferings that he almost regretted its influence. Eustace marked the big tear roll down the cheek of De Lucy, as he heard these words, and his pale trembling lips seemed incapable of making a second inquiry. 'Generous youth!' he softly ejaculated, more confirmed in the ideas he had before entertained, and yielding his rein to Edgar, he took the arm of Sigebert, and entered the Castle.

In

In the saloon they found the Lady Ermengarda, who arose in evident agitation on their entrance.

His sister Agnes was sitting in attentive attitude, listening to the mild precepts of the venerable Earl of Thanet: on sight of Eustace she sprung up, and was in a moment pressed to his affectionate bosom.

Her faded form, her languid eye, did not escape his penetrating gaze, and he observed her with anxious solicitude and regret.

Adela appeared not; and Rosalie was attending her in a state little inferior to her own, for since the death of Edwin Montague, sleepless nights and bitter tears of anguish had proved the ardor of her love for him. No sooner could Eustace withdraw his sister from the society of her friends, than he urged her to tell him the reason of her griefs.

‘ Oh! my Agnes,’ (he cried) ‘ dear sister of my young affections! let not
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‘ my heart be wounded by the sight of
 ‘ your distress : whence, my love, these
 ‘ pallid looks, these sighs, these faltering
 ‘ glances ? Ah my sister ! do you hesitate
 ‘ to confide to a brother, who loves you
 ‘ so tenderly, the reason of your grief ?’

The lovely girl sunk in his arms, and bathed his cheeks with her tears ; but no persuasions could draw from her that confidence which her affectionate brother required : she assured him that her situation was a happy one, and particularly noticed to him, that the conduct of Ermengarda had been most kind and attentive ; and with these assurances Sir Eustace was obliged to remain contented. His spirits were sadly altered ; he passed his time wandering amidst the dismal copses around the Castle, or gaining some height from whence he could overlook Wolfnorth ; he would remain for whole hours gazing on that interesting object, the scene of so many melancholy, and yet so many pleasing events.

events. These tender recollections would so involve him at times, that his friends were frequently obliged to seek him after night had fallen; but the same dignity pursued him in all situations, and forbade the attack of raillery or ridicule.

Three days after his arrival at Elfwold, Leander, the favourite page of Ermengarda, presented him the following note, and requested from him an answer.

“ Ermengarda, Countess of Mont Real,
to

“ Sir Eustace, Lord Fitz-Arnulf.

“ My lord ;

“ I have business of a private
“ and important nature for your attention :
“ be therefore in my octagon anti-chamber
“ at six o'clock this evening.

“ Ermengarda.”

To which note he gave the following
reply :

“ Eustace, Lord Fitz Arnulf,
 “ to

‘ Ermengarda, Countess of Mont Real.

“ Lady,

“ I shall punctually attend your com-
 “ mands at the appointed hour.

“ Eustace.”

True to the time, but much perplexed as to the nature of the interview with the Countess, when six o'clock had struck, he proceeded to the octagon chamber ; his mind melancholy and absent, ill adapted to attend to the concerns of any one, for his thoughts were solely occupied by Ethelburga. The Countess was already there, her countenance was anxious and disordered, her attire studied and magnificent.

‘ Madam,’ (said Sir Eustace, bowing as he entered) ‘ I attend your commands, ‘ happy if it is in my power to serve you!’

She returned his salute somewhat confusedly, and seating herself on a sofa, motioned

tioned to him to seat himself beside her.
A silence of some moments ensued.

‘ Lord Fitz Arnulf,’ (at length she said)
‘ long has pride struggled in my bosom
‘ against the sentiment, which devours my
‘ peace of mind ; vainly have I strove to
‘ overcome the feelings of my heart, but
‘ the fascinating object of my affections,
‘ ever present to my mind, has conquered
‘ my reason, and subdued the voice of dig-
‘ nity, of pride.’ The tender glance she
now directed at the youth, would have ex-
plained what was about to follow, had not
his eyes been obstinately fixed on the floor,
and his senses riveted in earnest attention
to her. ‘ My birth, my interest, my for-
‘ tune, none can deny ; my alliance has
‘ been sought even by royal blood, and
‘ the chief nobles of England have vainly
‘ sought my hand.

‘ But, alas ! what they have failed in
‘ obtaining by the most fervent sollicita-
‘ tions, I have yielded to one, who, to my
‘ confusion

‘ confusion I acknowledge, never sought
 ‘ my love! - - - - I have yielded it to
 ‘ one fortuneless and powerless, but whose
 ‘ beauty and valour know no equal ; and
 ‘ I even stoop to offer that hand and for-
 ‘ tune, and to own that he, and he alone,
 ‘ can reign emperor of my soul.’

Eustace, in astonishment, raised his beautiful eyes to her face ; *there* was written an expression he could not misunderstand, and, confounded by surprise, he pronounced in a dismayed tone, ‘ Lady!’---

‘ Yes, Eustace,’ (she continued in tones of tenderness) ‘ *you* are the master of
 ‘ my heart, and to you alone will I yield
 ‘ my hand and fortune.’

Plunged in a situation the most unpleasant, Fitz Arnulf sat with sorrow and consternation pictured in his face ; not a moment did he hesitate how to act ; notwithstanding the splendid offers of future greatness laid at his feet : but to refuse *delicately*, was the cause of his perplexity,
 an

an offer so indelicately and so directly made to him : at length he recovered himself, and replied---

‘ Madam,—the generosity of your offers
 ‘ have completely confounded me ; and I
 ‘ feel grateful for the honour you have
 ‘ done me ; but I am so fully conscious of
 ‘ your liberality and ingenuous conduct,
 ‘ that I will never take advantage of the
 ‘ munificence of your nature. No, madam,
 ‘ I am too fully sensible of my situation, to
 ‘ step into one so far above my deserts ;
 ‘ and I will prove to the Lady Ermen-
 ‘ garda, that I am capable of copying her
 ‘ generosity of conduct, by not taking ad-
 ‘ vantage of it.’

This refusal, though expressed in the most flattering manner, was pronounced with a firmness and dignity, which to a mind not blinded by passion, or warped by an intercourse with an interested world, would have been immediately comprehended. But Ermengarda either did not,

or

or would not understand him, and laying her hand upon his arm, with a smile, she replied,---

‘ And Ermengarda will prove how she
 ‘ can appreciate the generosity of Sir Eustace, by enforcing upon him the acceptance of the gift.—Yes, my future
 ‘ lord ! I will prove to the world, how sweet
 ‘ a rose may be found in the wilds of Northumbria !’ She pronounced these words in a voice of triumph, and an auditor would have believed that Sir Eustace had accepted her hand, but he returned---

‘ Alas ! Madam, since your generosity
 ‘ carries you so far, it is incumbent upon
 ‘ me to be sincere. Long ere Ermengarda
 ‘ appeared in Northumberland, my heart
 ‘ had become the willing slave to the most
 ‘ lovely and virtuous of ladies. My passion I own to be vain and luckless ! but
 ‘ I have solemnly sworn, that unless fortune should give to my arms the first and
 ‘ only object of my passion, never to wed,
 ‘ or

‘ or suffer myself to waver in my faith to her !’

The features of the Countess became o’erspread with a pallid hue, anger flashed from her eyes ; but as she turned to Eustace, his mild and inoffensive manner disarmed her, while his graceful and interesting figure harmonized for a moment her feelings, and melted her soul.

‘ From your vow, Eustace, a priest can absolve you.’

‘ Never, Lady ! till death has chilled my heart, will it cease to beat faithfully to its vows !’ --- He pronounced these words with all the enthusiasm of adoration, and raised his expressive eyes to heaven ; while Ermengarda, now totally inflamed with the most malignant passions, started from his side, and cried in a voice choaked by anger---

‘ ’Tis well, Sir Knight ! begone ! quit my insulted presence ! ’tis true thou hast hitherto known only my love ! Thou

‘ hast yet to feel the inveteracy of my
 ‘ hatred and revenge! *Tremble!* I will stab
 ‘ thee deeply, in the person of thy adored!
 ‘ ——yes, I will stab thee through thy ac-
 ‘ cursed Ethelburga!’ She rushed from
 the apartment overpowered with rage;
 while the astonished Eustace, shocked and
 pained with the scene, remained immove-
 able.

His residence at Elfwold now became
 irksome; the manner of Ermengarda was
 apparently unchanged to him, and it
 could not have been imagined that such an
 interview had occurred; but to the more
 attentive and penetrating observer, the na-
 ture of her glance was decided and dreadful.
 Thus persecuted as much by love as by
 hatred, Eustace wandered around the ivy-
 crowned towers; and with folded arms and
 downcast eyes, looked the picture of woe
 and melancholy—inspiring compassion in
 every heart, save the one in which it had
 been his misfortune to light the flame of
 love. He

He had returned one day from his solitary rambles, and knocked at the door of his sister's anti-chamber, for admission, when loud sobs from her bosom arrested his attention ; and, inattentive to every thing but the happiness of his dear Agnes, he was on the point of entering the room, when the following words, pronounced by her in a tone which evidently betrayed her distress, withheld him.

‘ Oh Vortimer, urge me no more ! How
 ‘ can I so repay your father’s kindness to
 ‘ me ? and what, oh my God ! would be the
 ‘ feelings of Eustace, were he to find his
 ‘ sister guilty of so much deception ?’

‘ Then you doom me to eternal misery !
 ‘ Agnes, you acknowledge your affection,
 ‘ yet stab the peace of the object of your
 ‘ regard, with the most deliberate cruelty !
 ‘ Oh Agnes, what right has a father to
 ‘ doom his child to wretchedness ? And, for
 ‘ Eustace,--I too well know the severe pre-
 ‘ cepts of your brother, to hope he will
 ‘ ever

' ever consent to our happiness: no, I
 ' cannot permit you to consult him. Oh
 ' unfeeling maid! can you see my faded
 ' cheek? can you mark the pangs which
 ' rack my heart, the agonies, the unremit-
 ' ting agonies I suffer, and still refuse me?
 ' Cruel, unkind girl, why do you hesitate
 ' to fly with me, to yield me your hand?
 ' It shall, if you will it so, remain a secret
 ' to all.—But mark me, Agnes, if you re-
 ' fuse me, I will rush into the fiercest of
 ' the battle, and eagerly seek that death
 ' which can alone release me from the mi-
 ' sery I suffer!'

The heart of Eustace beat high in his
 bosom, but no longer could he restrain his
 feelings, when he heard his sister, in a
 voice inarticulate from sobs, reply—

' Alas! Vortimer, dear Vortimer, you
 ' have conquered—I yield—'

' Hold, my sister,' (he cried, rushing
 wildly into her chamber), ' distract not
 ' my heart by consenting to the ungrate-
 ' ful and inconsiderate schemes of Vor-
 ' timer.

‘ timer.—Oh Vortimer,’ (he continued, as he sunk on a seat beside his distressed sister,) ‘ is it thus that you would blast for ever the honour of your friend?—and you, Agnes—is this the conduct that I have deserved from you?’

‘ Eustace, Eustace, forgive your miserable and ungrateful sister!’ cried the wretched girl, as she sunk on her knees before him, and clasped his damp cold hand in hers; quick as thought he raised her from her supplicating posture, and pressed her to his heart.

‘ Oh Agnes, my dearest sister, Heaven is my witness, that there is nothing that I would not sacrifice, to obtain for thee happiness, save my honour. This act will *not* obtain it; could my sister ever consent to live the object of reproving scorn, spurned by the family of her lord, and her brother pointed at as a monster of duplicity and ingratitude? And thou, Vortimer, how couldst thou thus betray my friendship?’

' friendship ? I call God to witness, that
 ' were my sister in a situation which thy
 ' father could approve of, that my fondest
 ' wish would be to call thee *brother* ; for
 ' my heart has long felt for thee all the
 ' affection of one.—But wouldst thou brand
 ' my name with infamy ? a wretched outcast
 ' of society—already a suspected assassin !
 ' and but late exonerated from the foulest
 ' crime man is capable of ! Oh Vortimer !
 ' wouldst *thou* fix the seal of conviction
 ' to those damning suspicions, and prove
 ' me what I am suspected to be—a villain !'
 —The big tear rolled down the cheek of
 Eustace, his bosom laboured with the most
 acute sensations, and Vortimer, completely
 subdued, flung himself upon his honourable
 breast.

Thus the scene closed, and Eustace ob-
 tained a solemn promise from Vortimer,
 that he would never renew his late request ;
 and Agnes, as a pledge of her repentance,
 begged him to take her for some time to the
 Fortress

Fortress of Fitz Arnulf; to this Eustace willingly agreed, and the following circumstance tended to hasten his departure.

Eustace had observed for some time, that the manner of the aged Baron de Warrenne was strangely altered to him; he attributed it in a great measure to the ill state of his health and spirits; but for the last day or two, his manner was not to be mistaken, and Eustace, whose pride was ever passionately alive, remarked it to him; at first the Baron evaded his interrogatories, but at length he replied---

‘ Does not thine own conscience and heart, my Lord, accuse thee of treachery towards me ?’

‘ My heart, Lord de Warrenne,’ (as he laid his hand emphatically upon his breast) ‘ never has beat but with sentiments of gratitude and veneration towards thee; and would sooner break, than be guilty of treachery towards thee.’

The brow of the Baron now contracted
into

into a darker frown, and he eyed Eustace with a stern regard, when he said---

‘Duplicity, Sir Eustace, from *you*, I did not expect.’

‘Duplicity! (cried Eustace, indignant fires darting from his eyes,) ‘who dare accuse me of duplicity? Am I then ever to be the sport of hidden foes, who fear to meet me openly in the light? is my name thus eternally to be branded unjustly?’---

He was continuing, when Sir Vortimer entered: he gazed with astonishment at their angered countenances, and exclaimed:---

‘Good heavens! what hath occurred to cause these emotions of anger, Eustace—and you, my father!’ The Baron continued to pace the room with irregular steps, then turning to his son, with anger working in his face, he said—

‘Yes, *you*, Sir, I suppose, are unconscious of offence, you ungrateful child have leagued with Sir Eustace, to undo me!’

‘Undo

‘ Undo thee, Sir !——I comprehend thee
‘ not !’

‘ Then comprehend me, and I will con-
‘ found you both, instantaneously. Have
‘ you, Sir, not given your heart to Ag-
‘ nes,---nay, perhaps your hand ?——and
‘ are not you, Sir Eustace, aware of this ?’
Eustace cast an accusing glance at Sir Vor-
timer, who quickly replied—

‘ I acknowledge all this, my Lord ; but if
‘ I have given Agnes my heart, surely the
‘ selection of nature’s best creation is not
‘ ingratitude to thee, my father.’

The Baron no longer heard him, pas-
sion choked his speech, and breaking
from his son, he left them.

Eustace avoided by further reproaches
adding to the distress of Sir Vortimer ; he
immediately ordered his steeds for their de-
parture, and leaving a letter for the Baron,
in which he fully justified himself, hastened
his sister to prepare for their departure, and
was soon on the way to Fort Arnulf :
while

while Vortimer, distracted that the honour of his friend should be thus impeached on his account, hastened to the Baron, and after a great deal of argument and concession, was permitted to tell his story. His father's rage against him was boundless ; but he consented instantly to write an apology to Sir Eustace, and even to thank him for the part he had acted : as he wrote, the native goodness of his heart became manifest, and he ended, by declaring, that he felt for Agnes the affection of a father ; but that his fortune was so much injured, that ruin must follow his son's marriage with a portionless bride. He begged of Eustace to return to Elfwold ; but the young hero's soul, stung by the accusation, although he freely pardoned the Baron, determined to inhabit the Castle no more.

Sir Vortimer was at a loss to conjecture the secret enemy who had thus poisoned his father's mind against him and his friend :
but,

but, alas ! it was the cruel and perfidious Ermengarda, who, stung by the refusal of Eustace, was determined to lose no opportunity to hasten his ruin ; she learnt from her confidential esquire, Sir Armada Vavasour, the visits of Vortimer to Agnes, she communicated her story to the Baron in her own way, and well knowing his views with regard to herself, insinuated that the conduct of Sir Vortimer offended her. Thus it was, that the generous old noble was instigated to act the unbecoming part he had done to Eustace, and which so ill agreed with the generosity of his nature.

Silent and melancholy was the orphan's journey ; the day was cold and misty, and the wind rushed mournfully along the wide moor.

As they approached the coast, it blew fresher from the sea, the tide was down, and the sea-bird screamed as it circled in the air, while the heron and other carnivorous birds stalked along the sands, and gorged the little eels the sea had left there. The place looked
sad

sad and desolate: but there was a wild solitary air about it, which Eustace hailed with delight; and preferred a thousand times to the festive board, and the gay throng at Elfwold.

The father of Edgar waited for them; he had a blazing fire in the best oaken room, of sea-furze and turf, and a neat though humble repast of fish and vegetables. As Eustace dismounted, he thanked the venerable old man for his attendance; and he now remarked the smile of serene pleasure which dressed his countenance, and those of his retainers, who had assembled to welcome their loved and honoured commander. All wore an air of tranquil comfort; and indeed the very liberal remuneration made by Sir Morcar and Lord de Warrenne, for the important services they had rendered them, had provided a comfortable maintenance for many of the poorer clan for life, who in return had worked gratuitously to increase the little
income

income of their young Lord, who had led them so nobly to glory and reward.

How then was the feeling heart of Eustace gratified, when Wilfred laid before him a heavy bag of gold, assuring him, it was the simple produce of his lands, and would annually increase! Tears of gratitude swam in the eyes of the poor orphans, as they saw themselves thus relieved from want, by the voluntary exertions of their vassals. And Eustace was still more gratified, when he found his little troop had increased to an army of three hundred men, who, allured by the glory and success of the Fitz Arnulfs, had prayed to be allowed to fight beneath his banner.

The retainers of Eustace made a handsome appearance; they were clothed in armour of the brightest metal, with the eagle lazoned on their breast-plates, the officers distinguished by a plume of white feathers. Morcar had presented to them a magnificent

nificent banner of white taffety, the eagle beautifully embroidered in silver springing from a golden coronet, and beneath it he had caused to be blazoned in letters of gold, the word " Victory."

Eustace, greatly enjoyed the solitude of Fort Arnulf, it soothed and nursed his passion; oft would he sit, when the moon laved its silver rays in the bosom of the ocean, his eyes fixed upon it, in the feeble hope, that Ethelburga might be at the same moment regarding it, and perhaps, that he was the subject of her thoughts, and the object of her regrets!---The scene would recall to his mind all the extacy of that night, when, in spite of the dangers which surrounded the Castle, he had seen Ethelburga regard the building which he inhabited with interest and anxiety. Then would he ardently repeat his protestations of fidelity and love, and mentally exclaim :---

' Oh my Ethelburga! can I doubt thee?

' no,

‘ no, it would be the blindest incredulity !
 ‘ ---Yes, I know that I am beloved ; and
 ‘ this sweet recollection, is at once my glory
 ‘ and my delight !’---

He then would retire to his solitary couch, and by recalling to his sleeping fancy, the image of his adored mistress, he would fondly cheat absence of half its pangs.

The room which they generally inhabited, looked towards the east ; it was old, but the best in repair, composed of heavy oaken pannels ; there were apparently no doors, the pannels slipping back to the touch of a secret spring. The room was square, the lofty ceiling of oak, and very plain ; the pannels decorated with uncouth pictures, whose heavy frames were of Moorish fashion : there were three long narrow windows, deep sunk in the wall, of Norman form ; the chimney was dark and heavy ; on either side were rooms of a similar construction, which all looked upon the sea : it was a
 mono.

monotonous prospect, not, however, without its charms ; and the dashing of the surf against the rocks, the mournful wind on the strings of Agnes's harp, the view of the distant vessels skimming along, and sometimes the magnificent scene caused by the sublime and terrific tempest, rendered the fortress by no means an uninteresting abode.

Thus, these persecuted orphans lived in uninterrupted tranquillity ; the temper of Eustace had acquired a pleasing and habitual melancholy, his countenance was the picture of patience and resignation.

Oh ! it was moving — to see this valiant youth ! this magnanimous hero ! this great and noble soul, passing the hours in a situation so far below his merits ! to see him pass them with placid serenity, seemingly unconscious that a world existed ! — he, the favourite son of glory, who knew that his presence was sufficient to ensure conquest ; he, with all the warrior in his
soul,

soul, stilling the storm of laudable ambition in his breast; and tending in retirement and solitude the helpless innocence of his orphan sister !

Long, however, the hero remained not alone: souls too congenial, too much his admirers, dwelt near him: De Lucy and Sir Ethelred passed many an unalloyed hour with him; and the gallant young Oscar, the favourite of Eustace, had often brought him the spoils of Clono's Vale, and laid the spotted fawn, an offering at his feet. Yes, Oscar, with health and beauty in his cheek, yet beamed from his eye the sickened ray of disappointed love ! and Rosalie, the mistress of his ardent soul, received the undivided homage of his enamoured heart.

The Baron and Sir Vortimer oft came to him, and tried in vain to draw him from his solitude.—But the young Knight resisted all their importunities, nothing could induce him to quit his melancholy abode,

where he passed his time in study, and hourly improving his already highly-cultivated and well-adorned mind.

CHAP. VIII.

“ With morning we rushed into the battle,
“ To Tormul’s surrounding stream :
“ The foe moved to the sound of Ton-Thormod’s bossy shield.
“ From wing to wing the strife was mixed.

Osian.

EUSTACE was one day pursuing his usual studies, when he was agreeably interrupted by the entrance of Stanley Fitz Aubrey: he observed, instantaneously, something eager and important in his countenance, as well as in those of Sir Oscar and Lord de Lucy, who followed him.

‘ I come, my dear Eustace,’ (said young Stanley), ‘ to beg you, like a second Cincinnatus, to leave your seclusion, and take upon you the command of armies.—’

Eustace shook his head and smiled, but replied,—‘ I fear, my dear Fitz Aubrey, ‘ you are come to prove me guilty of an ‘ untruth ; ’tis true, I promised you, that I ‘ would deny you nothing,—but in this in- ‘ stance, I cannot comply, my heart is too ‘ much wedded to the solitude which sur- ‘ rounds me——’

‘ Nay,’ (interrupted Stanley, with an arch look), ‘ spare yourself your argument, ‘ —you will comply, not only with will- ‘ ingness, but delight, —impatience.’ — Eustace waved his hand.

‘ What !’ (continued the youth), ‘ will ‘ you refuse the aid of your arm to Ethel- ‘ burga ?’

‘ Ethelburga !’—(exclaimed Eustace, a glow of brilliant crimson painting his cheek, and fires, ardent fires, darting from his eyes) ‘ Good heavens ! and can Ethelburga need ‘ my aid ? Who is there upon earth so ‘ vile and abominable, as to invade the ‘ peace of Ethelburga !’

‘ Oh

‘ Oh Eustace ! will you believe me, when
 ‘ I assure you, that your cousin, your ge-
 ‘ nerous cousin ! at this moment heads an
 ‘ army against her ? ’

‘ Almighty powers ! ’ — (exclaimed Eu-
 stance, as he clasped his hand upon his
 sword involuntarily), ‘ and can he be so
 ‘ base ? ’

‘ Here is a packet I bear thee from my
 ‘ brother, which will explain all to thee.’

Eustace pressed the packet to his lips,
 and retiring for a few moments, endea-
 voured to compose his spirits, and read the
 following letter.

“ **Sir Philip Fitz Aubrey, Lord**
Montague,
 to

“ **Sir Eustace, Lord Fitz-Arnulf.**

“ Eustace, when I last parted from thee, I
 “ promised, at thy urgent request, always to
 “ call upon thee in the hour of danger :
 “ that hour is now arrived. --- What words
 “ can I find, sufficiently forcible to ex-
 “ press

“ press my horror and indignation of the
 “ man, who brings his vassals to invade
 “ the domain of my child, who unfurls his
 “ banners in a hostile manner before the
 “ towers of my Ethelburga? Yet that man
 “ exists,—that man who was destined to be
 “ her husband,---who was sworn to protect
 “ her,---the cousin of Eustace,--oh heavens!
 “ the son of Osmond! And shall the son of
 “ Osmond spill the blood of the hundreds
 “ of the daughter of Ethelred? shall the
 “ Houses of Falconberg and Mont Eagle
 “ wage war against each other?——

“ Eustace, some time ago, the Baron of
 “ Mont Eagle came to demand the hand
 “ of his affianced bride: he came, not in
 “ the respectful manner of an attached
 “ lover; he came, as a master would de-
 “ mand the life of his slave. You are no
 “ stranger to the rumours, as well as the
 “ facts, that blacken that Chieftain’s cha-
 “ racter, they are of too vile a nature to be
 “ passed unnoticed:---and I, in conjunction
 “ with

“ with her uncle the Abbot, refused to be-
 “ stow her hand upon him, until he had
 “ satisfactorily accounted for his former
 “ conduct. I will not disgust you with a
 “ repetition of what followed—suffice that
 “ he ended, by vowing—that he would seize
 “ his prize by force,---that he would invade
 “ the habitation of Ethelburga!—yes, *he*
 “ vowed to lead an army against *her*, whom
 “ it was the duty of every man, more par-
 “ ticularly *his*, to protect!---

“ Eustace, already has his insulting
 “ herald been sent to demand the Baroness,
 “ and the submission of her Castle,---already
 “ do his hostile banners unfurl the silver
 “ lion to the sun.---Already has Fitz Alwy
 “ encamped his hundreds upon our wolds.
 “ ---Come then with your brave followers,
 “ with the assistance of your powerful
 “ arm, for I candidly acknowledge, valiant
 “ youth, that with *virtue* and *thee* upon
 “ our side, my mind will be at ease, and I
 “ shall fear no more!

“ Fitz Aubrey.”

‘ Good God !’ (cried Eustace, starting up in powerful emotion, and loudly summoning Edgar to his presence), ‘ and do I
 ‘ linger here, while hostile foes invade the
 ‘ Castle of mine adored ?—Edgar, my
 ‘ friend, life depends on expedition, mar-
 ‘ shal instantly my forces, let the trumpet
 ‘ sound to arms, and muster all you can
 ‘ for Wolfnorth’s service—and wait, Ed-
 ‘ gar; let all that are ready, mount instantly,
 ‘ the rest I leave to your safe conduct to
 ‘ the Castle.’ Then turning to his sister, he tenderly embraced her, and presented her hand to Fitz Aubrey. ‘ My Agnes,
 ‘ I must leave thee ; the knights that are
 ‘ here, with the troops of Montalt, will
 ‘ give thee safe conduct to the convent ;
 ‘ I go to protect my Ethelburga !’ And the sound of her name seeming to give new vigour to his mind, he again pressed his sister tenderly to his bosom, and taking her hand, led her to De Lucy. Stanley interfered, and begged that she might proceed
 to

to Wolfnorth.--But Eustace found that she herself preferred going to the convent, and, again calling down blessings on her head, he left her to the care of his friends.

‘Eustace! may I fight by thy side, and emulate thy actions beneath the Eagle banner?’—cried the gallant young Oscar, as he seized his hand.

‘Brave Oscar, too happy shall I be to have you join me with your forces; hasten to Clono’s Vale, summon your archers to the field, and follow me to Wolfnorth—wilt thou, Oscar?’ ‘That will I, Eustace:’ And the brave youth, putting his bugle to his lips, his esquire Sigismund with his attendants appeared, and vaulting on his saddle, he waved his hand and fled lightly over the moor.

Two hundred of his vassals in the course of two hours flocked around the Eagle standard, which he gave to the youthful Henry Mortimer, a well-proved warrior not of ignoble birth: he sallied

from the fortress with Sir Ethelred Mont Rose and Stanley Fitz Aubrey, and ere the sun was set he was before the towers of Wolfnorth. Then Fitz Alwy's army indeed appeared numerous and comely to behold: the silver Lion-rampant proclaimed the chieftain's tent, at sight of which Sir Eustace was unable to contain his rage.

Soon did the anxious Warden descry the graceful figure of Sir Eustace, who yet wore the sable plumes with which he had supplied his crest for the death of De Mowbray, and young Edwin. Pleased with his promptitude, wide were thrown open the gates to give the gallant little army entrance, and as he affectionately pressed his hand, he cried—

‘ Thanks, gallant Eustace, thy conduct
 ‘ will be ever gratefully remembered by me
 ‘ and Ethelburga.’ He then led him to the
 saloon, where awaited with palpitating
 heart the anxious maid: Eustace sunk upon
 his knee in emphatic silence, during which
 his

his eyes were raised in timid expression of adoration upon her glowing countenance, and spoke all the agitation of a soul tremulously alive to the softest sensations :—at length the Baroness uttered with a fascinating smile—

‘ Have I not observed my faith to thee,
‘ Eustace ?’

‘ Oh pattern of fidelity and honour ! pa-
‘ ragon of your sex !---how shall the grate-
‘ ful heart of your lover find means to
‘ express the half of its admiration and
‘ gratitude ?’

Sweet and still was the converse of the lovers—how dulcet the harmony of their congenial souls !---but they were not permitted long to enjoy this intercourse ; Eustace was summoned to the council chamber, where the good Warden had assembled the Knights and Chieftains, and debated upon the measures best to be pursued. It was shortly decided, that they should *not* await the attack of Fitz Alwy, which would
alarm

alarm the Baroness, but that it would be more becoming to sally from the Castle, and promptly to force the Baron to retire from his post. This bold resolve suited well the eager temper of Eustace, and he expressed in the warmest language his approval of the Warden's measures.

Not till late did the council break up : the season had now put on its mourning habit, and denied the lovers the sweet enjoyment of a soft still walk round the Castle's walls ; the presence likewise of the other Knights contributed to render their situation irksome ; a few moments, however, they enjoyed in the full unbounded intercourse of their souls ; and when Eustace pressed the trembling angel to his bosom, and swore to keep inviolable his faith and love,—when the first rapturous kiss of love was imprinted by him upon her ruby lips !—earth, he imagined, held not a being so blessed as himself. With a soul thrilling with rapture he sought his couch,
where

where however he found that the emotions awakened in his heart, banished from his pillow the soothing influence of sleep.

It was long past midnight, and Eustace still tossed with watching eye upon his feverish bed; when the Castle's walls rung loudly with the horns sounding repeatedly at the outward keep. He arose and joined Sir Philip, who, alarmed by the sound, had dressed himself, and they flew to the battlements. Sir Leonard de Falconris, the Sub-Warden, was already parleying with the disturber of their repose, unwilling to open the Castle gates. As Eustace approached, he thought he knew the voice, but was soon confirmed in his opinion, when he heard Sigismond, the trusty esquire of Sir Oscar, pronounce the following words:—

‘ If you yet doubt me, bear to Sir Eustace Fitz Arnulf the following——Tell him the gallant Oscar, Lord of Clono’s Vale, has been intercepted in his march by Mont Eagle’s watchful troops, who have

‘ have attacked him, and that he now maintains a fearful and unequal fight upon the wold.’

‘ I come ! I come ! ’ cried Eustace, waving his hand to Sir Philip, and he expressed his determination of sallying to the assistance of his friend ; while the Warden hastened to Ethelburga, to quiet her mind from the sounding of Sigismond’s horn at the Castle gate.

Soon the troops of Eustace, accompanied by Sir Edgar and Henry Mortimer, hastened where the loud braying trumpet proclaimed the testy broil. He found the youthful Oscar bravely contending with a stout party of Mont Eagle’s troops, headed by the Baron Dun Rock, and Walter de Segrave ; but the troops of Oscar being entirely archers (to which mode of arms he obstinately adhered), fought on the most unequal terms, having only a short sword, in the use of which they were not very well accomplished. Oscar was
 attacked

attacked personally by the two chiefs, whom he most vigorously kept at bay ; but he must eventually have either been killed or taken prisoner, had not Eustace with his followers appeared, and immediately changed the fate of the day, leaving Dun Rock covered with wounds upon the moor.

Oscar, with his gallant troop now entered Wolfnorth with Sir Eustace, and being presented to Sir Philip, he led him to a couch to rest him after the fatigues of the combat.

Early in the morning they were joined by Lord de Lucy, and the warriors of Montalt, and by Sir Vortimer heading two hundred of the De Warrennes : and thus being fully prepared to encounter Fitz Alwy, they determined to give him battle immediately, in order to prevent his being beforehand with them in attacking the Castle.

It was now that Sir Philip Fitz Aubrey shone in a new and most highly admirable character :

character : hitherto his situation had precluded his entering into the warfares of his friends ; but now called upon to defend the Castle with which he was entrusted, he stepped forward in all the glory of his character, recalled to the mind of the Abbot the youthful adviser of his antient friend the Baron Osmond, the partner of his victories, the warrior of the Holy Land—for he at once shone an experienced general, a valiant and undaunted warrior.

Each knight admired the coolness and deliberation of his measures, and gazed in astonishment, as the graces and mature beauties of his form appeared animated by all the energy of youth. Vigorously he examined every troop, and gave to them their separate destinations—Stanley gazed in astonishment, and knew not his brother.—Now for the first time could you perceive that there was indeed only ten years difference in their ages.

Himself

Himself he boldly placed at the head of the men of Falconberg, and was to form the centre of the army in front, to attack the foremost of the enemy. Stanley on his left, Sir Ethelred on his right, and to the care of Sir Durant Fitz Osborne was given the standard of Falconberg,—not by the wish of the Warden, but from an earnest request that young knight had made to the Baroness the evening before.—

The rest of the command Sir Philip resigned entirely to Sir Eustace, who, elated with this distinguished mark of his confidence, used the utmost exertion of his judgment. He stationed Lord de Lucy on the right of Sir Philip's army, and the De Warrennes on his left—reserving to himself only his own men, giving his standard to Edgar, and young Henry Mortimer; Sir Oscar was close by his side, and his standard was guarded by Sigismond and Dagobert. His intention was to watch the fate of the battle, and engage wholly,

or to divide his little army to engage, where danger and difficulty seemed most to require him.

Black plumes and scarfs, De Lucy thought too particularly distinguished Sir Philip, Sir Eustace, and Sir Stanley; but they would not lay them aside.

Ethelburga, drowned in tears, was deaf to the consolations of Augustine; she trembled for her hero! her heart was full of painful and portentous surmises: and when she embraced and bade him a last farewell, her bosom heaved but too convulsively:—vain were her endeavours to articulate, her pallid lips pronounced not his name, and she gazed upon him in frantic anguish—around Sir Philip's neck she hung in tears, and pressed his hands in silence to her bosom—‘And wilt thou bleed for me?’ as she riveted her tearful eyes upon the forms of the heroes, she cried. The heart of Fitz Aubrey felt pangs of keenest anguish, as he broke from
this

this idol of his mind ; but ~~Eustace~~, as he pressed her to his bosom, bade her be firm and confident. ‘ This arm,’ (he cried), ‘ my ‘ Ethelburga, never yet hath failed me ! and ‘ shall it fail me now, in such a cause ? ’—

The dignity and resolution of his demeanour was more than mortal. It reassured the heart of Ethelburga, and inspired her with confidence.

Sir Philip had every reason to believe, that Fitz Alwy’s army would be thrown into confusion by so sudden and unexpected an attack ; but treachery had evidently been employed against them, for as they advanced, it was easy to perceive that their opponents were well prepared to receive them. At the sound of the brazen trumpet every one engaged—Sir Philip was seen in the thickest of the battle, scattering the ground with the bodies of the slain, his waving banner marked his glorious course, as hot with conquest he strode into the midst of his foes—The men of Falconberg,
whose

whose eyes where riveted upon him, with the most ardent attachment watched his standard as the harbinger of joy or woe, encouragement or depression ; his towering sable plumes were seen to wave above his surrounding heroes, his helm feathers appeared to float upon the wave, now high now low, as he mingled in the battle ; nothing was to be heard but the loud song of the clarion, the clashing of faulchions, the shouts and cries of the victorious, overpowering the groans of the dying ; all was a confused busy hum of indistinct warfare ; pennons and banners were seen flying aloft, elevated or depressed by the varied fate of the battle.

Now the Silver Lion was seen opposite to Sir Philip's sable plumes ; yes, arm to arm were engaged the adverse Chiefs !

Eustace, the terror of his foes, the astonishment and admiration of his friends, drove all before him ; he was now encountered by a host of enemies, who in
vain

vain endeavoured to surround him, so staunchly did young Oscar protect him as he fought. The cry of, 'Take the Eagle! —Take the Eagle! dead or alive!' was shouted on all sides, and the warriors pressed hard upon him—Now the gallant hero o'erpowered his foes by dauntless valour and amazing skill.

Ethelburga from her high tower watched the portentous battle, with the Abbot; now with horror and dismay she saw the press of foes around the standard of Eustace, which seemed to be the point of attraction to the field. Fitz Godwin of Alnwick, Hontercombe of Ithona, Walter de Segrave, Toscar Lord Cronla, and Algernon Mount Bernard, surrounded Sir Eustace and Sir Oscar; but how her anxious bosom would have throbbed, had she seen her hero, now obliged to mount upon the bodies of that hill of foes his bravery had laid breathless! In this elevated situation, a sudden rush was made upon him,

him, a blow from Lord Cromla brought him on his knee, and another from Lodore would have cut short his thread of life, had not young Oscar outstretched his buckler and received it on his arm; deep it cleft the shield in twain, and sunk into the flesh of the gallant youth. Now Eustace, inflamed to madness at the wound his preserver had received, once more arose, and fought with so much renewed vigour and eagerness, that the troop of Fitz Godwin, who surrounded him, stood daunted as they viewed him, and uttering wild shrieks declared he was not mortal, and fled with velocity. Eustace having now turned the tide of the battle, attacked them and beat them before him, and prepared as they fled to pursue them, when casting his eyes on that part of the wold where Sir Philip fought,—

‘All-gracious God!’ he cried in agony—
 ‘do I see the standard of my Ethelburga
 ‘flying?’ Loud cries now burst from
 the

the Falconbergs, quick as lightning he quitted the pursuit of the Fitz Godwins, and rushed towards the retreating banner ; soon he cut his way through, and gained the dastardly Fitz Osborne.

‘ Return, return !’ (cried the enraged Eustace) ‘ shall the banner of Ethelburga fly, while there yet survives a Falconberg to protect it ?--What fear’st thou ?--Turn, turn, I say !’---

Fitz Osborne was evidently confus’d—
 ‘ ’Tis impossible to face such an enemy, (he cried), ‘ Sir Philip is subdued.’

‘ Thou liest, poltroon !’ cried the frantic youth as he marked the sable plumes of Fitz Aubrey, waving upright although surrounded by a host of foes, and the Falconbergs gradually giving way. Well he knew the destructive effect the sight of the flying standard would have upon them, and madness flashing from his eyes, he cried :---‘ Oh Ethelburga ! shall thy banner fly before the foe, while Eustace lives !

‘ --- give

‘---give *me* the standard, shameless villain!’---and he endeavoured to wrest it from the grasp of Fitz Osborne, who still however persisted obstinately to bear it to the ground, and conceal it from the view of the discouraged Falconbergs. Eustace now suspected a base and treacherous intention,---his heart throbbed impetuously in his bosom, he could no longer restrain himself, but making a cut at the pole of the banner, he severed it together with the bleeding hand of Fitz Osborne from the quivering limb!---he now waved it in the air, and cried to the flying vassals:---
 ‘ Oh men of Falconberg!---where is your
 ‘ love and your far-famed courage? be dastards no more!---Turn, turn and redeem
 ‘ your honour!---Fight! do you not fight
 ‘ for Ethelburga?’-----

Soon the exalted standard was hailed with shouts by the vassals of Wolfnoth, and Eustace, amidst loud applauses, rushed into the thickest of the affray with his
 enlaureled

enlaureled troops; young Oscar was by his side, and they joined Sir Philip exactly as the Mont Eagles were about to take him prisoner, with his gallant brother, who fought stoutly by his side.—Thrice Eustace waved his banner in the air! thrice he shouted ‘for Ethelburga!’—the troops of Wolfnorth, disheartened, no longer rushed after his glorious steps; victory and devastation soon surrounded them. Now Eustace found himself engaged with Fitz Alwy! his heart beat tumultuously in his bosom! That Chieftain, casting his eyes upon the blood-stained banner which Fitz Osborne lately bore, and now carried by Eustace, faltered and turned deathly pale!—by a stratagem he contrived that his troops should cover him; no longer could he maintain a combat with his magnanimous cousin, he concealed himself from his view, his troops, on sight of Eustace, (who appeared a very god! dealing destruction around him, even by the very glances

of his eyes,) fled in wild disorder from the field, to the umbrageous rocks and coverts of Mont Eagle, there to conceal their appalled souls from the heroes who had vanquished them. They were followed, however, with death and slaughter from the hands of Lord de Lucy and Sir Vortimer de Warrenne ; while the gallant archers of Sir Oscar sent their arrows after them so thick, they almost concealed the dastard vassals from the view of their pursuers.

“ Victory ! victory ! ” --- was shouted upon the breeze ! Ethelburga saw the graceful figure of her hero, exalted upon the corpses of the slain, waving her standard over the conquering Fitz Aubrey.

“ Victory ! victory ! ” --- was shouted from a thousand tongues, mingled with her name and that of Eustace ! when the Baroness, who watched breathless the issue of the battle, now totally overcome, sunk breathless in the arms of Augustine.

No sooner was the battle's rage stilled,
than

than Eustace and Sir Philip surveyed with tears of sorrow the bodies of the slain ; all the hero was subdued in their hearts, now totally absorbed in the Catholic, and the man. Eustace remembered the wounded Sir Durant, he sought for him around the spot on which he had seized the standard, but on the strictest scrutiny he was not to be found : this circumstance caused in their minds the utmost surprise, more particularly as no other corpse was missing from the field. The conduct of this young man had been such as to leave little doubt of his being a secret emissary of Fitz Alwy ; it opened the eyes of Sir Fitz Aubrey to many things which had before appeared mysterious, and in him he thought he plainly recognized the treacherous writer of the mysterious scrawls ; the evident suspicions of poor Edwin Montague were recalled forcibly to his mind : he commanded the strictest search to be made for him in vain, and

the circumstances of his flight decided in their minds his treachery and his guilt.

Tenderly did Ethelburga embrace the conquering heroes, and falling at their feet poured out all the gratitude and joy of her soul. The eyes of Eustace, swimming in tears of tenderness, told her how sweet was every expression of affection; a few moments were given to the sweetest and most unalloyed extacy — they were moments when not a whisper breathed upon the air! for, as their passion increased, the power of speech seemed lost.

Revelry, for the first time since the death of De Mowbray, rang the Castle's stout walls, and not till a late hour did the exhausted chieftains retire to repose.

CHAP. VIII.

" But when thou didst return from war,
" How peaceful was thy brow !
" Thy face was like the sun after rain."

Ossian.

ON the morning succeeding this glorious day, a day in which so many heroes had written in characters of blood their immortal names!—the good Baron of Elf-wold arrived to congratulate the victors on their conquest; he anxiously wished to press the hand of Fitz Aubrey, whose glorious actions had been repeated with enthusiasm, and to gaze with awe and admiration upon the youthful hero, who had secured to the men of Falconberg, this
signal

signal and important conquest. Eustace with dignified modesty received those tributes to his valour, but ascribed their victory to the justice of their cause, not to the valour of his arm.

It now grew late, and still Fitz Aubrey appeared not ; Eustace began to be alarmed : hitherto he had not feared any thing from the delay, for his esquire, Roy de Montford, had received orders from him the preceding night, not to disturb him in the morning, as he felt extremely fatigued ; but now the ruddy sun played upon the battlements of the Castle, Eustace and Stanley hastened to his apartments. They knocked in vain for admittance, and at length being seriously alarmed they forced open the door—but what was their surprise and dismay, on undrawing the curtains of his bed, to find the Warden was not there ! No signs of violence appeared, the bed had evidently been slept in—and, dumb with anxiety, they
searched

searched his oratory, and then pursued their way to Father Bertrand's rooms; but alas! he was no where to be found. Conscious that he had not been in or about the Castle, Stanley yielded himself up to despair, while the Abbot and Eustace were in the utmost consternation. There was no doubt that he must have been forced from the Castle, by some unknown passage. In vain they waited, no one appeared, and Sir Philip was lost to them, perhaps for ever. Eustace had slept, since his last arrival at the Castle, in those apartments formerly occupied by Fitz Alwy, and therefore was totally prevented from overhearing any noise that might have been made in carrying him away; and the Esquires of Sir Philip slept at so great a distance from him, and were so much overpowered by the day's fatigue, that they were blameless. Aware, however, of the agony this event would cause Ethelburga, Fitz Arnulf instantly commanded the strictest silence to be observed upon the

H 5

subject,

subject, and he no longer looked upon Wolfnorth as either eligible or secure for her continued residence; he therefore settled with De Warrenne, that she should go to Elfwold, and be induced to believe that Sir Philip had requested she should do so. Fearful of taking her there publicly, Eustace was cast into the utmost indecision, and would in all probability have given up all thoughts of removing her, in the fear of her falling into the hands of Mont Eagle; but the Abbot, being informed of his distress, declared that he would ensure her safe conduct from the Castle, that he knew the secret of a subterraneous passage from Wolfnorth to his monastery, through which she could proceed without the possibility of discovery, and by means of a monkish disguise, could go from the monastery in safety to Elfwold. This being arranged, Father Bertrand endeavoured to compose his countenance, and conceal the agitation he suffered on account of this disappearance of
of

of Fitz Aubrey, and proceeded to Ethelburga. She received him as usual with smiles, unconscious of the fatal misfortune that had befallen him.

‘ My child’ (said the Abbot embracing her) ‘ must prepare to depart with me from
 ‘ Wolfnorth: the Baron of Mont Eagle
 ‘ meditates a forcible entry into the Castle,
 ‘ and we wish to avoid the confusion which
 ‘ would result; besides, when he finds you
 ‘ are no longer here, he will abandon all
 ‘ idea of attacking the Castle, and spare
 ‘ a further effusion of blood.’

Ethelburga smiled her pleasure at the conclusion of the sentence; and the good Abbot had the satisfaction to observe, that not the slightest ray of suspicion was in her mind.

‘ Whither am I to go, Father?’ (at length she demanded.)

‘ To Elfwold, my daughter; and if every
 ‘ thing remains quiet here, your friends
 ‘ will shortly follow: but your departure
 ‘ must

‘ must be kept a profound secret, and
 ‘ likewise the place of your abode ; I there-
 ‘ fore propose taking you by the subter-
 ‘ raneous passages to the monastery, and
 ‘ from thence you will continue your little
 ‘ journey in the disguise of a monk ; Eu-
 ‘ stace will be with you, and then you will
 ‘ have nought to fear.’

With alacrity Ethelburga prepared for her departure ; and when ready she proceeded (accompanied by Oswy and little Fitz Aymer, whose father ever mild and serene was with her) to the private apartments of her uncle. There she found him with Father Clement and Eustace, armed cap-à-pee, attended by Edgar, and fifty trusty men at arms, who were to follow within call of the horn which Edgar bore in case of danger, and headed by Sir Stanley, who well knew the way.

‘ Shall I not see Lord Montague before
 ‘ I depart ?’—asked Ethelburga.

‘ He

‘ He is deeply engaged,’ (replied Eustace) ‘ will you excuse his attendance?’ She bowed ; and taking his arm, and that of the Abbot, proceeded into the subterraneous passages which wound eastward for nearly a mile beneath the wold. Clement followed, leading Oswy by the hand, and Sir Aymer de Valance that of his little son ; and lastly, Edgar of Northwood, who, stoutly armed, watched that no danger surrounded them.

‘ My Ethelburga fears not?’ said the gallant young Eustace, in the tenderest accents.

‘ No, Eustace,’ (she fondly replied) ‘ for *thou* art with me.’

Melancholy and damp, however, was their dreary path, now and then intercepted by gates of iron, which creaked hoarsely upon their hinges, and scarcely yielded to Father Bertrand’s trembling hand. Now and then they crossed little rills of transparent water ; it was a soil abounding with springs whose waters left a crimson track behind

behind them ; their path was a gravel walk which nature made. The rocky sides of the narrow caverns glittered from the rays of the torches, (for here reigned eternal night), and the little pages, as they passed along, frisked in delighted youth at this novel scene.

‘This secret passage, my daughter,’ (said Father Bertrand, seeking to beguile the way,) ‘was made in the reign of Alfred ; for formerly, the spot where now the eastern part of Wolfnorth stands, was a convent, endowed by Queen Emma, of the same order as the monastery we are now going to ; and this passage was used by the monks to pass and confess the nuns, and perform the other sacred rites of the Church.’

They now arrived at a little drawbridge which was chained up, on the opposite side of a limpid stream : Father Bertrand drew from his vest a little tucket, which he sounded thrice, and the next moment the bridge was

was lowered. Passing over it, they arrived at a low arched door, which Bertrand with his master-key unclosed, and they entered a small but neat sequestered cell, whose sole furniture was a lamp suspended from the vaulted roof, an oaken table, a chair, a heap of straw, an ebony crucifix, an hour-glass, a jug of pure water, a brown loaf, and several holy books. Near a table stood the venerable hermit of the place; his head was thinly scattered with a few grey hairs, and eighty years seemed not to have ruffled his tranquil countenance, in which the world was forgotten. At sight of the armed knights, he looked surprised.

‘Peace be with you!’ (said the Abbot,)
 ‘fear not; the Baroness of Wolfnorth
 ‘craves from our monastery the protection
 ‘of a few hours!’

At her name, the aged man passed his hand over his eyes, grown dim with age; but a tear, one solitary tear, found its way across the back of his furrowed hand, and
 gazing

gazing upon her, he replied in tremulous accents—

‘ Blessings on thee, my daughter, dear
 ‘ was thy youthful father to these eyes ; my
 ‘ ears first received his infant prayers!’
 Ethelburga involuntarily dropped on her
 knees; and received the Hermit’s fervent
 blessing ; then turning to Bertrand, he
 said---

‘ Holy Abbot, I trust no dire misfortune
 ‘ has forced thee to seek for shelter in our
 ‘ monastery : Jesu forbid !’

Bertrand retired for a moment with him
 to his cell, and told him of the mysterious
 disappearance of Fitz Aubrey ; but the aged
 Damian declared no sound had disturbed his
 ears since the Abbot had last passed that
 way, except Father Clement having pro-
 ceeded to Wolfnorth. They now summoned
 brother Emilian, a young monk, whose
 shaven crown and sombre robes (notwith-
 standing the pallid hue of sorrow which
 o’ershadowed him) could not conceal the
 unparalleled

unparalleled beauty of his countenance, the symmetry of his features, or the dignity of his demeanour. Grief in external lines had there, however, marked its dire abode ;—his countenance oppressed with despair, his graceful front was a striking contrast to the mild placid look of Damian, it was a picture fraught with interest.

This young monk was no other than Alonzo, Lord de Montalt, De Lucy's elder cousin, and once the heir of all those vast possessions ; misfortunes of the keenest and most appalling nature had induced him to immure himself for life.

The whole party were struck with the utmost admiration at sight of the youthful recluse ; but their regards seemed to distress and embarrass him. Father Bertrand now proceeded to request the monk's permission for the Baroness to pass through the monastery ; for it was a strict rule of the house, that no female should be suffered to enter.

Damian

Damian in the mean time placed before them such fare as the monastery afforded ; but the Abbot Bertrand allowed not his order to become a society of voluptuaries ; he was himself abstemious, and his flock as much so ; if ever spotless innocence dwelt amongst any set of men, it was those of whom Father Bertrand was the director.

After they had rested for some time, Emilian returned, accompanied by the fathers Conrade and Dorimel, who bore the monk's consent that the Baroness of Wolfnorth should pass through their abode. They were fearful, however, of taking the little pages with them ; Oswy and Fitz Aymer therefore were delivered into the care of Damian and Emilian until the following day.

Ethelburga, in her dark loose robes, and her cowl drawn over her face, was completely disguised ; Eustace's graceful form lent charms to the monastic habit, which would have softened the grief of many a vain inhabitant of this world at quitting it.

Edgar 3

Edgar and the two soldiers were to follow at a small distance, not apparently to belong to the party : and thus equipped, Eustace and Sir Aymer, having each ready a sword and dirk concealed beneath their robes, they set forward.

Calmly and uninterruptedly they pursued their way ; Elfwold lay scarcely two miles from the monastery. Ethelburga, though anxious and timid, listened to the pious discourse of Father Bertrand with her wonted attention ; but Eustace only seemed to do so, for his thoughts were painfully employed in pondering upon Sir Philip's disappearance, and his heart anxiously alive to anxieties upon his Ethelburga's account ; he was conducting her for safety to those walls inhabited by her rival,—a woman violent by nature, and designing by education ; her dreadful threat (hitherto disregarded) now rushed with full force upon his mind. The Baron de Warrenne was returned to Elfwold ; to him, therefore,

therefore, he determined to relate the whole transaction. Prompted by his fears for Ethelburga, the delicate secrecy he otherwise would have kept for Ermengarda's sake, he now felt himself compelled to infringe.

At length the moss-covered turrets of the Castle burst upon their view, surrounded by clumps of pines and evergreens; and the venerable Chieftain of the castle, who stood anxiously waiting their arrival, advanced and conducted them into the Castle. They now conferred on the best means of keeping Ethelburga secreted; one night it was determined that the whole party should remain at the Castle; on the following day, Eustace and the Abbot were to return to Wolfnorth, and if they could learn no further tidings of Sir Philip, were to raise an army with all possible expedition, and attack Mont Eagle.

Filled with unpleasant ideas, Eustace sat sad, and silently by Ethelburga's side:—Ermengarda had received them both with
marked

marked kindness ; a mournful smile, however, she tried not to conceal ; she cast upon the hero looks of melancholy and reproach, but withall was so attentive to Ethelburga, that he hoped she regretted her past conduct, and was determined to think of him no more. When he retired to his chamber, however, Leander, the page of Ermengarda, delivered him the following billet. He shuddered—but was greatly relieved on perusing the following lines.

“ **Ermengarda, Countess of Mont Real,**

to

“ **Sir Eustace, Lord Fitz Arnulf.**

“ Alas ! Sir Eustace, you are returned
 “ in order to witness the departure of the
 “ unhappy Ermengarda ;—yes, she has de-
 “ termined, by absenting herself, to endea-
 “ vour to forget you. She forgives you,
 “ brave youth ! and the innocent cause of
 “ her past jealousy ; and the only wish
 “ which remains in the heart of the unhappy
 “ Ermen-

“ Ermengarda, is to see you happy in each
 “ other ! But, alas ! she is not capable of
 “ being witness to that happiness without a
 “ pang ; she will fly therefore the North—
 “ fatal has been her residence ! Remember
 “ her, Sir Eustace, remember her, if not
 “ with love, at least with pity.”

Eustace read the billet with rapture ; no
 lover could have been more delighted than
 he was at this acknowledgment ; he has-
 tily penned the following lines :

“ Ermengarda can never be sufficiently
 “ assured of the gratitude and esteem of
 “ the unfortunate Eustace. Depart not,
 “ lady, from the North—to-morrow I shall
 “ quit Elfwold.

“ Yours, devotedly,

“ Eustace.”

On the following morning, as soon as
 dawn painted the east, the anxious youth
 started.

started from his pillow, and uttering a fervent prayer for the safety and happiness of his adored mistress, he joined Father Bertrand, and departed from the Castle.

CHAP. X.

“ His eye spares not the weak,
“ He delights in the blood of strangers.”

Ossian.

WHEN Fitz Alwy had expressed to Sir Philip Fitz Aubrey his intention of invading Wolfnorth, he returned with a lighter heart to Mont Eagle; his callous nature felt not the smallest compunction at the idea of disturbing the peace of his mistress, of attacking her castle, or of destroying her relatives and dearest connections: it promised a speedy end to all his doubts and fears, it gratified all his selfish inclinations—and he was satisfied.

One circumstance had strangely alarmed
him;

him; his anxious eye watched in vain for those symptoms of decaying health in the Abbot and the Warden, which he hoped to have seen, and he now began to fear, that the potion composed by Ignatius was of a harmless nature; and this portended a change of conduct in that monk, teeming with so much horror and alarm to him, that he dared not trust his mind to dwell upon it. No sooner did the Baron arrive at Mont Eagle, than he issued orders for the assembling of his troops with the utmost expedition. But here a new difficulty assailed him; Sir Hildebrand (who had of late become worn out with the prodigality of his master, and whose age no longer left him able to make the exertions of a young man,) declared to Fitz Alwy, that his troops refused to serve, unless previously paid their long due stipend. The Baron, unused to such a reply, became furious, and taxed the Warden with want of care and assiduity; Sir Hildebrand answered only with
 a cool,

a cool, contemptuous sneer :—this was too much for the haughty Chieftain, he instantly struck him violently on the face :—hell became manifest in the old man's countenance ; he reminded him of truths so damning, that willingly would he have bathed his steel in the Warden's blood, thereby to have ensured his secrecy, had not the place of their contention ill befitted such a deed. Never was the blow forgotten ! a deep revenge was brooded by Sir Hildebrand, who felt so completely aware of the diabolical intention of his master, that from *that moment* he never wandered forth unattended, or without a poisoned dirk, of which he but too well knew the use.

Fitz Alwy, under these difficulties, applied to Lord de Morthermer ; but that noble assured him, that his coffers were drained to the very last extremity, and that he had already been obliged to apply for assistance to a Scotch relative. The Baron, on this reply, gave himself over to despair ;
when

when Fitz Godwin of Alnwick, who was profuse and generous, but newly come to his title and possessions, and whose heart was replete with envy and malice against the Falconbergs, issued him the supply he required, and the troops of Mont Eagle once more bowed beneath his banner. His mind was no sooner at ease with regard to the provision of his vassals and mercenaries, than it reverted to his uneasy restlessness concerning Ignatius. To his impetuous demands of Ignatius, why the poison had not operated, he replied that he had made it of as slowly operative a nature as possible, and that he did not expect it as yet to take effect. For the person of Eustace he offered large rewards ; but whether they doubted the fulfilment of his profuse promises, or whether the fear of Eustace's well-known valour intimidated them, he remained at liberty.

Mont Eagle having made every skilful preparation for attack, and likewise through

the means of his secret emissary at Wolf-north having obtained information of the exact hour they prepared to surprise him, very little expected so signal a defeat, and, goaded by feelings of the severest disappointment and the most inveterate hatred, he determined to obtain by *any* fraud, what he had failed to accomplish by force.

His secret emissary had introduced him to concealed passages, known not even to the Abbot, or Sir Philip Fitz Aubrey ; for in these days, each Baron kept a secret channel of escape, known only by himself, and which he revealed but on his death-bed to his heir, and in the like manner was it handed down to posterity. But the late Baron having died suddenly, and his mind so agitated by other events, he had forgotten to make this sacred deposit; and thus were they committed to oblivion, until the conspiracies of Fitz Alwy introduced into the Castle, a man whose sole object was to make himself acquainted with

with every secret, which might further the views of his wicked employer:—his deeds were dark, his mind ever brooding on hidden acts, his wanderings obscure, his curiosity indefatigable.

Possessing the power of entering the Castle, Fitz Alwy determined to convey Sir Philip and Eustace away, thereby removing every adversary he most dreaded; and he then intended to shake the firmness of Ethelburga's mind, by assuring her, that these beloved friends had cowardly deserted her.

Scarcely was Sir Philip Fitz Aubrey locked in deep slumber, which excessive fatigue both of body and mind rendered more sound, than he was awakened by a gag being thrust into his mouth, while his arms were tied by four stout fellows, and himself being lifted through the concealed door, was swiftly conveyed into the subterraneous passages, and from thence, beyond the Castle walls. Excessive was his agony,

to find himself hurried across the moor ; in vain did his noble soul prompt struggles of almost supernatural strength, when he remembered the dangerous situation of Ethelburga ; the ruffians who tore him away, derided all his attempts, and laughed at his struggles, and the agonized groans which burst from his bosom. Wearied at length with successless exertion, and stung by the insolence of the barbarians who bore him away, he sunk into a haughty inactivity.

As soon as the ruffians had succeeded in securing Fitz Aubrey, a part of them returned, and proceeded to the apartment generally occupied by Sir Eustace : Providence, however, in this instance defeated their villanous designs : great was their astonishment and disappointment to find the rooms deserted,—they knew not where he slept, and were obliged to depart thus frustrated, and join their companions, who were dragging away Sir Philip. The
Warden

Warden heard with the utmost delight, from their passioned exclamations, that Eustace had escaped them, and he uttered a fervent prayer, that he might live to preserve the Baroness.

After a painful journey, he descended into the caverns of Mozt Eagle, and being strongly manacled, was conveyed into a damp and miserable dungeon, and there being ungagged, was left in darkness and silence to all the agonizing reflections of his tortured mind.

Fitz Alwy was stung to the soul, at not being able to discover the apartment of Eustace, and, determined no longer to be thwarted, he formed no less a design, than to carry away the Baroness herself. On the following night, therefore, he, armed with his minions, Sir Bevis de Wilton and Lord Ithona, explored Wolfnorth once more. They were obliged to enter the Castle by the chamber of the late De Mowbray; the attempt was attended with the
greatest

greatest danger, for the apartments of the Baroness lay at the extremity of the Castle, and they were obliged to pass through inhabited galleries of vast extent. Under the greatest anxiety, they arrived at her apartment; its utter darkness alarmed them; feeling on the bed the unturned coverlid, and the vacuity which every where presented itself, convinced him that he had lost his prey.

Furious became his soul,—dreadful were his imprecations,—with difficulty the accompanying villains succeeded in restraining his loud impassioned expressions, which they every moment feared would betray them. The Abbot more particularly received his imprecations, as he accused him of having conveyed away the Baroness with so much secrecy; and, thus foiled in his base attempts, he vented his rage and intemperate fury on every one who approached him.

Sir Philip Fitz Aubrey, in the mean time,
spent

spent his hours in the deepest affliction; not for himself did the generous hero sorrow—his own confinement, his own sufferings, would have been supported with a more than manly fortitude; his spotless life rendered him fearless of the dagger of the assassin, death to him had no terrors!—but when he reflected on the helpless and unprotected state of his Ethelburga,—when he thought upon her terrors,—upon *her* anguish,—his heaving bosom could scarce contain his bursting heart, and his manly cheek was wet with tears of bitter agony.

‘ All-blessed Redeemer,’ (he exclaimed),
 ‘ and thou, all-sainted Mary, watch over
 ‘ the helpless innocence of my child! shield
 ‘ her from the machinations of the wicked,
 ‘ and restore her to these arms!’

Uninterrupted was his solitude; his jailors obstinately maintained a brutal silence, to all his questions respecting the fate of Ethelburga; they brought him his fare, and then left him to the horrors of his
 gloomy

gloomy dungeon; scarcely a ray of light pierced through its eternal shade, and that was admitted through a narrow-barred loop-hole, high in the wall: the monotony of his existence was terrible, his soul was in a continued agony of tenderness and alarm; the walls of his prison echoed with his groans, and he seemed to feed his sorrow upon his tears and sighs.—While he thus suffered under the wickedness of Fitz Alwy, that chieftain scarcely enjoyed a better existence,—if the nature of his feelings indeed were analyzed, Fitz Aubrey's lot would be found, to his, far preferable. In vain did the Chieftain make the strictest inquiries concerning the abode of Ethelburga, he could not discover it; scouts were sent all over the country, in order to learn whether she had been observed: in vain, however, where all his endeavours to obtain any intelligence of her, so completely did she conceal herself in the guardian towers of Elfwood. He then plunged himself

himself into melancholy, he shut himself up,—no stranger, nor even his partners in vice, were admitted to him—and he, sunk into a state of surly grief, which no one around him felt sufficiently interested in, to endeavour to dissipate.

Thus was he situated, and was one day pacing his gloomy apartments, with folded arms and scowling brow, when his esquire, Sir John de St. John, ventured (not without reluctance) into his presence.—Fitz Alwy, in a voice something between a growl and a passionate exclamation, demanded the reason of his intrusion; Sir John replied, that a Knight had arrived at Mont Eagle, who bore the crest of the Countess of Mont Real; that he said he had business for his private attention, ‘and perhaps, my Lord’ (added Sir John, who saw the cloud ready to burst, that had been gathering on Fitz Alwy’s brow), ‘perhaps, my Lord, he has brought information of the Baroness of Falconberg.’—His observation

answered his purpose,—for the lowering cloud was succeeded by a ray of impatience, which in Fitz Alwy was always allied to impetuosity, and he commanded that the stranger should be instantly ushered into his presence.

While he awaited his arrival, he paced the room with quick emphatic steps; at length a tall thin figure appeared, he bowed obsequiously to Fitz Alwy; his vizor was closed on his entrance, but as soon as Sir John had departed, he removed it, and disclosed to Fitz Alwy the strikingly marked countenance of Sir Armada Vavasour; he then drew a packet from his breast, and presented it to the Baron :—

‘ The Countess of Mont Real greets thee, my Lord, and sends thee this packet, —shall I await until thy answers are prepared? and I request thee to command thy esquires, not to ask me to display my countenance.’

Fitz Alwy, who felt certain of the pleasing

sing intelligence contained in the packet, gracefully received it, and, to secure him from intrusion, himself led him to a private apartment, and ordering him refreshments, withdrew to peruse the following :

“ Ermengarda, Countess of Mont Seal,
 “ to
 “ Fitz Altop, Baron of Mont Eagle.

“ Baron, you have already seen, but you
 “ have yet to know me ; this is not however
 “ my case—I have seen you, and *I know*
 “ *you*, even to the secret movements of
 “ your soul. The same interests bind us
 “ to each other, the bond of alliance
 “ is already pledged, for your enemy is
 “ mine.—He who thwarts your happiness,
 “ has already wrecked my peace of mind ;
 “ let us unite to punish *him*, and to for-
 “ ward the schemes of each other.

“ I have long heard with astonishment,
 “ that your proffered love hath been re-
 “ jected by the Baroness of Wolfnorth :—
 “ strange

“ strange infatuation !—rejected for one so
 “ far your inferior in every respect,—strange
 “ blindness ! which prevents her duly appre-
 “ ciating worth like yours ! You have
 “ lost the Baroness ;—swear to assist me in
 “ the punishment of your rival, and she
 “ shall yet be yours.—She is in my power,
 “ for she reposes beneath these towers.

“ But if I give over to your arms the
 “ the matchless Baroness, you must swear
 “ solemnly to take Lord Fitz Arnulf
 “ prisoner, and keep him for my disposal.
 “ —I would punish him for the past,—
 “ he has offended me, and he is lost. If
 “ thus the bond of amity is sealed, com-
 “ municate without reserve to my most
 “ trusty esquire, Sir Armada Vavasour ; he
 “ will serve us secretly, and faithfully.

“ Fare thee well, gallant Chieftain ; per-
 “ haps you may be yet better known to—

“ Ermengarda.”

The

The transported Baron pressed the paper to his lips.—‘Worthy the wife of Fitz Alwy!’ he exclaimed, and, as the expression passed his lips, his mind, ever on the watch for new schemes of aggrandisement and guilt, conceived the most horrible purpose—no other than, that when Ethelburga should have ceased to interest him, to plunge a dagger in her heart, and possess the land and fortunes of the Countess Ermengarda. Then, arousing his thoughtful mind, as he folded up the letter he exclaimed—

‘Perhaps thou hast said truly, Ermengarda; we may yet be better known to each other!’

He now joined Sir Armada, and presented to him his hand, when they immediately consulted on the best method of accomplishing their wishes. The plan proposed by Ermengarda, Sir Armada soon explained; it was this—that the Baroness should draw Ethelburga to walk on the terraces on the
east

east side of the Castle, which were only protected by a low wall and two centinels.—
 ‘The centinels I can easily draw aside,’ (continued Sir Armada); ‘but you must be well-prepared to take more prisoners than one; for the ancient Earl of Thanet for ever accompanies her in her walks, and my fellow esquires, Sir Dominick and Sir Dunstaville, are not to be trusted.’

‘Fear not,’ (said Fitz Alwy impatiently); ‘were there fifty of them, they should soon wear my fetters. To-morrow, and every succeeding day, we will lay in ambush in the wood eastward of Elfworld;—but what shall be the signal of your appearance?’

‘A piercing scream from Ermengarda—which will appear to have proceeded from her having seen you: when you hear that, you may rush forth, and without a moment’s delay, seize your prisoners.’

‘’Tis well, my friend; my obligations cease but with my life:’—and he manifested

fested that pleasing and apparently amiable condescension which a villain always does to an inferior who serves him in his villainy. ‘ I’ll to my closet, pen a few short lines to thy fair lady, and then thou shalt proceed to Elfwold.’

‘ Short, if it please thee, let them be, my Lord ;—it would perhaps breed suspicion, were I missed from the Castle, and frustrate our designs !’ replied Sir Armada, with that confidence and freedom which an inferior always assumes to those who have introduced them with their crimes.

‘ True, trusty Vavasour,’—returned Mont Eagle; and hastening to his closet, he penned the following :

“ Fitz Altop, Baron of Mont Eagle,

“ to

“ Ermengarda, Countess of Mont Real.

“ Lady !

“ In what terms can I paint the
“ rapture and gratitude of my heart? Thy
“ kindness,

“ kindness, thy ingenuous conduct, de-
 “ mands my admiration,—it hath already
 “ inspired it. Dare I express my wishes?
 “ —they are, that Ethelburga possessed but
 “ half the graces thou dost, most fasci-
 “ nating of women : how blessed would be
 “ my lot !

“ Need I assure you, that my degene-
 “ rate cousin, whom hitherto humanity
 “ hath spared, shall soon lay in chains at
 “ your feet ; too happy to receive his doom
 “ from your lips.

“ Every thing is settled with thy good
 “ esquire, Sir Armada, who urges me to
 “ finish in haste, and restricts the effusion
 “ of gratitude, lovely Lady, from the pen
 “ of

“ Fitz Allwp.”

Sealing the packet, he delivered it into
 the hands of Sir Vavasour, who quickly
 mounted his fleet steed, and by a private
 path quitted Mont Eagle ; while the
 Baron,

Baron, with altered mien, and impatient step, eagerly flew to communicate his happiness, and ensure its certainty, with his old confidants, Lord Ithona and Sir Bevis de Wilton.

In the mean time, Sir Eustace, having left his Ethelburga in the protection of the good Earl Wulstan de Warrenne, pensively pursued his way by the side of the Abbot. Each bosom was now totally occupied by considering the fate of Sir Philip ; and their cogitations were of so gloomy a nature, that they dreaded to break silence, and to betray how unsatisfactory their reflections were to each other.

The Castle of Mont Eagle, from its elevated situation, and the forest which surrounded it, was almost impregnable ; and the Baron could command a force sufficiently numerous to annoy its assailants to madness ; a long and painful siege was in view, which might after all end in having uselessly sacrificed the lives of many brave fellows.

fellows. Thus pondering, some time elapsed in the most unpleasant manner ; and the idea of Fitz Aubrey, imprisoned by the inhuman Fitz Alwy, lingering out his virtuous life in chains, in sighs, and lamentations, rushed so forcibly on his mind, and appealed so immediately to his feelings, that he involuntarily cried—

‘ No, Fitz Aubrey ! while this arm yet
 ‘ hath strength to wield the faithful partner
 ‘ of its toils, thou shalt not remain a pri-
 ‘ soner.’

Father Bertrand raised his eye upon the animated figure of his young companion ; his glance expressed his admiration and his gratitude,—but he mournfully said—

‘ What, my gallant youth, if Fitz Aubrey
 ‘ be not at Mont Eagle ?—what if he be
 ‘ no more ?—’

Eustace shuddered, and cast his dark expressive eyes upon the Abbot, full of horror and dismay.

‘ He dared not do it !’ said Eustace ; the
 Abbot

Abbot shook his head :—they now entered the halls of Wolfnorth.

From this moment the gallant young noble acquired from the Abbot the right of acting in place of Sir Philip, and was seconded in all his undertakings by young Stanley, who, miserable on account of his brother's loss, relaxed not a moment the vigour of his conduct. They immediately dispatched their faithful herald Valiant, to Lord Henry Murray, stating their situation and that of Ethelburga, and requiring his aid. And Eustace engaged Lord de Lucy to summon to his aid all the forces he could muster. Sir Leonard de Falconris proved by his resolute conduct, the admirable discrimination of Fitz Aubrey in the choice of his officers, for a worthier or more valiant gentleman never existed ; and he regarded Sir Eustace with the same deference he would have paid to the Warden had he been present ; and indeed every one seemed voluntarily to entertain for him
the

the highest veneration, so powerful was the effect his virtues and his valour had created.

Having made every necessary arrangement, and summoned every adherent to the house of Falconberg, to fight beneath their standard, Sir Eustace and Sir Stanley set out on their return to Elfwold. With an aching heart did the youthful hero pursue his way; he dreaded to meet the anxious inquiries of Ethelburga, for Sir Philip, and he despaired of being able any longer to conceal from her his loss. Thus ruminating, he threw his reins over his courser's neck, and with folded arms and downcast look pursued his way, unheeding each surrounding object — when, his horse starting, an ugly hag crossed his path; the animal seemed frightened, and the Knight caught up his reins in order to subdue it, while his eye wandered over the frightful figure before him. Her stature was low and bent double, her skin swarthy,
and

and her person emaciated, two grey eyes full of deep penetration and mischievous cunning peeped from below the penthouse of her forehead ; on her head was a black conical cap, her tattered vest was red, and she rested her hooked chin upon two withered hands, and them upon a crutch which supported her, while she stood steadfastly regarding Sir Eustace as he passed.

‘ Why dost thou regard me thus ? ’ — exclaimed the youth as he reined in his steed, and seemed uneasy at her steadfast look. A malignant smile was returned by her, and then muttering a few words she said in a hoarse loud tone :

‘ What thou seem’st, thou art not, Knight ! —

‘ What thou seek’st, is gone in dight ! ’ —

And while Eustace asked her the meaning of her words, she was seen no more : Stapley, who had watched her with dismay mingled with disgust, now cried —

‘ Good

‘ Good heavens ! perfectly do I recollect her—oh inauspicious wight ! what new evil is to befall us ?—Jesu save us from the spells of hellish agency ! ’ exclaimed the youth as he ardently pressed the brilliant cross given to him by Ethelburga to his throbbing heart. While he yet murmured prayers for her safety, a hasty galloping of horses was heard, the knights and their esquires instantly drew their swords and stood prepared to meet the foe—when Sir Oscar appeared, bearing before him the form of a female, his countenance was ghastly, his head unarmed, and the lady’s robes were dyed with blood ; he was unattended by his esquire, Sigismond ; as soon as he saw Eustace, he cried :—

‘ Well met ! well met !—haste thee, dismount ! catch this dear burthen—my strength is exhausted—I can no more. ’—
They flew to him, whom the action of stopping had overcome, and caught the
lifeless

lifeless form of Rosalie in their arms. At this moment the lovely daughter of De Warrenne opened her eyes ; they removed her dark disbevelled tresses from her pale countenance, the now senseless Oscar caught her view—she caught his cold hand, and bathing it with a shower of tears—

‘ Oh my gallant preserver !—generous Oscar ! — save him ! succour him ! ’ she cried, turning a piteous glance on the youths who stood over her.—

They laid Sir Oscar on the turf, and Rosalie recovering herself, began to divest him of his armour, while Stanley flew to the trickling rill beside the road, and bringing the water in his casque, bathed the wounds of the young knight, who soon revived again. They bound his wounds, which were deep and ghastly to behold ; his head rested on the shoulder of Rosalie, who bathed him with her tears.

‘ Oh Oscar,’ (she cried) ‘ did I deserve
‘ that you should be my preserver at the
‘ risk

‘ risk of your life ?—Holy Mary ! save the
‘ gallant youth !’

Oscar would have articulated but the effort was vain, but his countenance spoke a tranquil joy—as he gazed upon the form of his mistress, whom he had adored even to a fault.

‘ Oh Stanley,’ (quoth Rosalie) ‘ haste
‘ thee to the field yonder on the right be-
‘ hind the hill ; there lieth the brave Sigis-
‘ mond and Dagobert, perhaps no more !
‘ Oh ! haste to preserve those gallant
‘ youths, to whom Oscar owes his life !’ . .
‘ And thee ! my love ! my Rosalie !’—
murmured the gallant youth.

Stanley instantly departed with his esquire for the fatal field,—as now the youthful Oscar lifted up his head from the shoulder of Rosalie, and gazed upon her with a look of rapture and anxiety.—Eustace requested an explanation of the scene he witnessed, and Oscar said :—

‘ Fain would I ask of Rosalie how she
‘ fell

‘ fell into the power of that villain Walter
 ‘ de Segrave, from whom it was my good
 ‘ fortune to rescue her.’

‘ Most willingly, Oscar, will I tell thee—
 ‘ although the recollection of my perilous
 ‘ situation still makes me shudder. This
 ‘ morning I was seated by the side of Ethel-
 ‘ burga at the window, when something
 ‘ on the grass which sparkled most bril-
 ‘ liantly caught our sight; we gazed upon
 ‘ it for some time, until curiosity prompt-
 ‘ ed me to go forth in search of it. The
 ‘ Lady Ermengarda, and her worthy cou-
 ‘ sin Mortimer, as I imagined, were walk-
 ‘ ing at no great distance. As I ap-
 ‘ proached, Ermengarda asked me if I
 ‘ had perceived the glittering bauble,
 ‘ which she was likewise come forward to
 ‘ examine; her cousin’s vizor was down,
 ‘ but he had the crimson scarf of Lord
 ‘ Morthemer on; and I never for a moment
 ‘ suspected who it was, but proceeded with
 ‘ them to the spot where this jewel lay,
 VOL. IV. K for

' for it proved to be a magnificent dia-
 ' mond ring. We now thought its pos-
 ' sessor might be walking in the adjoining
 ' copse, and I heedlessly entered it with
 ' Ermengarda and the Knight; she, think-
 ' ing, she heard a noise, darted forward, and
 ' I was left alone with him. I endeavoured
 ' to follow her, but the Knight took my
 ' arm, and drew me into another direc-
 ' tion. I was astonished at his silence and
 ' strange demeanour, and declared I would
 ' return. "A little further, Rosalie!" he
 ' said in smothered accents; but my ear
 ' caught the detested tones of Sir Guis-
 ' card's, not Lord Morthemer's voice.—
 ' "Whence this disguise?" I screamed,
 ' and prepared to fly; when seizing me
 ' under one arm, he blew his hunting horn,
 ' and his two esquires, Sir Theodore Gave-
 ' ston and Hubert Throckmorton, ap-
 ' proached leading his horse, on which he
 ' placed me, and surrounding my waist with
 ' his arms, set off full speed; I cried with
 ' all

‘ all my strength, and struggled vainly, for
 ‘ we proceeded in this manner until an old
 ‘ hag appeared to rise from the earth ; the
 ‘ horse of Sir Guiscard took fright, and
 ‘ darted with the velocity of lightning over
 ‘ the plains. Vainly did the Knight en-
 ‘ deavour to restrain the speed of his cour-
 ‘ ser ; he proceeded an amazing distance,
 ‘ threatening me each moment with de-
 ‘ struction ; welcome, however, would that
 ‘ destruction have been, rather than to have
 ‘ been wedded to Sir Guiscard de Mont Real.
 ‘ —The velocity with which we proceeded
 ‘ at last robbed me of my senses, and when I
 ‘ recovered, I found myself seated on the
 ‘ turf, and Sir Guiscard chafing my tem-
 ‘ ples. In vain I endeavoured to disengage
 ‘ myself from the embrace in which he en-
 ‘ folded me, while he addressed to me the
 ‘ following words :—

‘ “ Obdurate Rosalie ! didst thou ima-
 ‘ “ gine that *thy* consent was necessary to
 ‘ “ the completion of my nuptials--thou

‘ “ wert wrong, fair maid.---Mont Real’s
 ‘ “ will is law, his love the sole guide of
 ‘ “ his actions; if this infernal accident
 ‘ “ had not occurred, ere this thou shouldst
 ‘ “ have been my bride.”

‘ Tears rolled down my cheeks, but I
 ‘ firmly declared I never would wed him,
 ‘ and assured him his conduct rendered him
 ‘ more hateful to me than ever. He further
 ‘ discoursed, but I replied not to him; he
 ‘ had removed his vizor, and I saw pride and
 ‘ passion distorting his countenance; he
 ‘ made the surrounding hills re-echo the
 ‘ tones of his horn, but his esquires approach-
 ‘ ed not. He cursed the accident, and the
 ‘ poor animal which caused it, and again
 ‘ blew louder his bugle. At this moment we
 ‘ heard the trampling of horses,—I renewed
 ‘ my cries: he imagined it his esquires, and
 ‘ smiled, when from the adjoining wood
 ‘ came forth Walter de Segrave, Lord El-
 ‘ phin, and their esquires.

‘ My bride, by St. Dominick!’ (ex-
 claimed

claimed de Segrave) ' come, come, Sir
 ' Guiscard ; unhand the lady.---We nor-
 ' thern birds will never let a canary run off
 ' with the game—long have I sought out
 ' such an opportunity as this,—you, fair
 ' Rosalie, are no stranger to my passion,
 ' and you shall go with me !'

' Sir Guiscard hesitated in what manner
 ' to act, but De Segrave drew his sword ;
 ' upon this, he dropped me to the earth,
 ' and mounting his courser, ran away, to
 ' the great amazement of the party who
 ' now possessed me !'

Eustace and Sir Oscar smiled at this
 proof of Sir Guiscard's cowardice.

' Half dead with terror, I implored him
 ' to restore me to my father ; the monstrous
 ' Walter laughed in ridicule, he took me
 ' round the waist and sprang upon his
 ' horse ; I struggled with all my might,
 ' but the most violent of my efforts seemed
 ' not to move a single finger, or to cause
 ' him the slightest inconvenience. I had
 ' yielded

‘ yielded my mind to despair, and we proceeded back some distance, when this valourous youth appeared. — Oh Eustace! ’tis in vain for me to repeat his gallant conduct—I saw his esquire low—I saw the purple stream gush from the hero’s side — I saw the monsters fall beneath his arm, and sunk senseless!’—She concealed her face, and wept.

‘ Alas, Rosalie!’ (said the affectionate Eustace, seizing this favourable moment to plead the cause of his gallant friend) — ‘ you are destined to be the cause of many a wound to Oscar!’—Has not his conduct proved to you the ardor of his love? Do not years of faithful love claim from you some return?’

Rosalie smiled through her tears—it was a sad smile! Oscar threw himself at her feet in an attitude of supplication. The colour fled her faltering lips—recollections of the most painful nature rushed across her mind, she burst into tears. Eustace cast
upon

upon her a look of tender reproach ; she composed herself and said :—

‘ Yes, Oscar deserves a better reward
 ‘ than I can give him ; my tenderest esteem
 ‘ he ever has possessed ; my gratitude is in-
 ‘ deed great---but, alas ! more I have not to
 ‘ bestow !’---and she again burst into a
 flood of tears. Eustace was moved at
 these testimonies of faithful affection for
 poor Edwin ; but Oscar, gazing implor-
 ingly in her face, faintly said :---

‘ Yes, Rosalie ! you have a gift to be-
 ‘ stow, now entirely at your disposal, and
 ‘ which would make me blest indeed !—
 ‘ dear maid ! bestow on me your hand ; my
 ‘ love, my attention, my gratitude and
 ‘ forbearance, shall in time win for me
 ‘ your love !—Give me, Rosalie, but the
 ‘ right to protect you, let me be the guar-
 ‘ dian of your happiness ; where will you
 ‘ find so faithful and so anxious a friend ?
 ‘ Where can you better repose your sor-
 ‘ rows, than in this bosom ?—where con-
 ‘ fide

‘fide your safety, but to these arms?—
 ‘Sacred shall be your sorrow, sacred your
 ‘person.—Give me but your hand, with
 ‘the right to protect you!

‘Generous Oscar!’ (cried the wonder-
 struck Rosalie as she presented him her
 hand) ‘since you yet desire it, deign then
 ‘to accept it; feeling and goodness like
 ‘yours never can be rewarded with in-
 ‘gratitude!’

Oscar was so much overpowered with
 rapture, that the blood gushed anew from
 his wounds, and he sunk pale and senseless
 at her feet.

Stanley now returned with the two
 wounded esquires; ‘The body of Lord El-
 ‘phin, and the two esquires must remain
 ‘for awhile,’ (whispered he to Eustace,
 anxious to spare Rosalie the knowledge of
 the blood which had been spilt)—‘I saw
 ‘Walter being led from the field, Oscar
 ‘must have performed an astonishing ex-
 ‘ploit.’

They

They now placed Oscar on a steed, and he was supported by Edgar ; on another was placed Rosalie, led by Sir Eustace ; Stanley remained with the wounded esquires, until relief was sent from Elfwold. They had not, however, proceeded far before they descried a party of the De Warrennes, galloping most furiously towards them.

‘ They have discovered your seizure, Rosalie ! ’ said Eustace with a smile.

Sir Vortimer now arrived : ‘ Thank God ! *you* are safe, my sister ! ’—he cried, then casting on Eustace a look of the keenest sorrow, he tremulously said :—

‘ Oh, Eustace ! how shall I speak it ?—
 ‘ Fitz Alwy, that accursed wretch ! has, I
 ‘ fear, at last possessed himself of Ethel-
 ‘ burga ! ’—he stopped ; for Eustace, as if struck by a flash of lightning, without a groan dropped senseless on the earth.

CHAP. IX.

"Thy words are mighty, for thy warriors gather behind thee.
"But do I fear them, son of pride?
"I am not of the care of the feeble?"

Ossian.

ALAS! the matchless Ethelburga was too surely in the power of the villanous Baron of Mont Eagle; and that through a series of the most artful contrivances, chiefly formed by the most malignant of women.

The Countess of Mont Real never for a moment relaxed in her anger and resentment against the luckless Eustace; but she awaited with cool determined malice, some opportunity of revenging herself upon her hated rival, and was well aware
that

that she could never so completely accomplish their ruin, as by betraying the Baroness into the power of Fitz Alwy.

She embraced the opportunity which her concealment at Elfwold gave her with delight, and she regretted that she had ever threatened Eustace with her revenge; and, in order to lull his suspicions, she penned the billet, which had so fatally effected her wicked purpose. No sooner had Eustace returned to Wolfnorth, than she summoned her favourite, Sir Armada Vavasour; and he, ever ready to obey her desires, willingly undertook all she required.

As soon as Sir Armada had departed, her cousin Sir Guiscard de Mont Real entered from an adjoining closet, and declared his knowledge of all that had occurred, protesting that he would frustrate all her views, if she did not, in return, for his secrecy, assist him to obtain the hand of the beauteous Rosalie. Ermengarda had

long frowned upon this alliance, as she well knew her to be fortuneless ; but every former desire of her heart yielding to her wishes of revenge, she granted him his request, and betrayed the luckless Rosalie into his power.

When her plans had succeeded, and she had got rid of her cousin Sir Guiscard, she returned to the Castle, in order to betray the other victim of her diabolical heart. Rosalie having been missed some time, she pressed Ethelburga to go in search of her, and the Baroness willingly arose to find her young favourite. As she departed the saloon, she met at the door the Earl of Thanet and Sir Eustacius de Mont Rose ; who no sooner found their intention to walk, than they begged permission to join them : Ethelburga, sweetly smiling, placed her arm within the venerable Earl's, and they proceeded to the ramparts, joined by De Wright and Sir Armada Vavasour.

Lord

Lord Thanet had formed a very sincere affection for Ethelburga; as they walked together, he revealed to her his intention of bestowing upon Agnes a portion sufficient to obtain Lord de Warrenne's consent to his son's marriage with her. Filled with this benevolent project, they were conversing eagerly upon it at the very moment of their seizure. They walked first, and at some little distance from the rest; Oswy and Fitz Aymer were far behind. Sir Armada sent the centinels on an errand to a short distance, when a loud scream from Ermengarda alarmed them,—in a moment, a troop of armed men rushed from the copse, and seized Ethelburga and Lord Thanet. Sir Eustacius instantly drew his sword, which was artfully drawn from his hand by De Wright: he then drew his dirk and stabbed a ruffian, who attempted to seize him, but in the next moment was rescued. Ethelburga, whose cries had been forcibly stopped, was now borne

borne away in triumph quickly to the forests of Mont Eagle, and conveyed with Sir Eustacius and Lord Thanet into the caverns below, when the concealed doors were fastened after them, and seemed to cut off every hope of succour.

The little pages soon alarmed by their cries the inhabitants of Elfwold. Ermen-garda was carried apparently senseless to the Castle, and when she recovered she revealed the misfortune that had befallen them.

The unfortunate object of her hatred had in the mean time been dragged to Mont Eagle, in a state of insensibility; when she recovered, she found herself in the apartments that she had formerly occupied, two female attendants hung over her and attended her with the utmost care; but her doors and windows were carefully secured, the subterraneous entrance to her chamber, by which Sir Philip had formerly appeared, had been discovered and
nailed

nailed up, while centinels, who paced the corridors in all parts of the Castle, precluded the most distant hope escape or communication with her friends. For some time she yielded to despair ; when she reflected upon the agony of Eustace and the misery of Fitz Aubrey, when they should discover her seizure, she wrung her hands in wild transports, and wept until her tears of sorrow seemed expended. But after her first transports of grief had subsided, she calmly reflected upon her situation—on the indignity thus offered to her by Fitz Alwy, who, regardless of her birth or her exalted station, had obtained possession of her person by the most nefarious contrivances, and by the most outrageous actions ; and as she reflected, pride succeeded to grief within her heart, and she firmly determined never to be compelled to alter her determination towards him. For some time after her seizure, Fitz Alwy, awed by the idea of viewing so much injured

jured virtue and goodness, approached her not; but on the second day, he had the temerity to intrude upon her solitude, and dismissing her attendants, addressed her in the following words:—

‘Willingly, Ethelburga, would I have
 ‘avoided the steps I have been obliged to
 ‘take, and which, harsh as they may ap-
 ‘pear, were absolutely necessary to *your*
 ‘security, as well as *my* happiness. Could
 ‘I see Fitz Aubrey, the man who was in-
 ‘trusted with the care of you by your
 ‘departed father, forgetful of his duty
 ‘both to him and to you, strive to in-
 ‘duce you to refuse the performance of
 ‘that father’s will, in order to sacrifice
 ‘you to his insatiate avarice and ambition?
 ‘Could I see you thus hurried on to de-
 ‘struction—knowing, as I did, that it was
 ‘my *duty*, as well as my inclination to pro-
 ‘tect you? Could I see you sacrificed
 ‘tamely, and not step forward to rescue
 ‘you? Alas! Ethelburga, you have
 ‘sighted

‘ slighted my advice ; you have opposed
 ‘ the forces I sent for your protection, and
 ‘ have finally obliged me to pursue a stra-
 ‘ tagem, in order, against your will, to
 ‘ secure your person, and protect your
 ‘ rights.’—

Ethelburga arrested his harangue, by a contemptuous and haughty look ; he was for a moment awed, while she addressed him :—

‘ My Lord, the Baroness of Falconberg
 ‘ is able to protect herself — even from
 ‘ *thee*, her greatest and most bitter enemy.
 ‘ ’Tis true, you have succeeded in tearing
 ‘ me from the protection of my friends,
 ‘ and from the protecting swords of my
 ‘ vassals : — you, Sir, have violated the
 ‘ sacred honour of knighthood, by your
 ‘ base and unmanly conduct ;—but learn,
 ‘ Fitz Alwy, that never did Ethelburga of
 ‘ Wolfnorth feel her dignity so high, or
 ‘ her safety so secure, as when dependant
 ‘ upon the firmness of *her own* mind, and
 ‘ the

‘ the resolutions of *her own* actions ;
 ‘ and which every insult, and every op-
 ‘ pression, will serve but to strengthen.’

Fitz Alwy paced the apartment, fired by rage and disappointment : he had hoped that Ethelburga, torn from her friends, would easily have been intimidated to become his victim ; her gentleness, her mildness, had given him a false idea of her character, and little did he expect to meet a heroine, who in firmness and resolution was more than his equal. At length he replied—

‘ Since no arguments, no persuasions,
 ‘ can convince you of the unworthiness of
 ‘ your favourites ; let me assure you of the
 ‘ folly and inutility of your rejecting me
 ‘ any longer. You are in my power ; of
 ‘ what avail is it therefore, for you to pos-
 ‘ sess an inclination, which will never be
 ‘ consulted ?—nay, frown not so contemp-
 ‘ tuously.—Your father bequeathed you to
 ‘ me, and mine by hell or heaven you soon
 ‘ shall be ! You are my prisoner, lady ;
 ‘ remember

‘remember that *you* are now in my power,
 ‘and every wound, and every affliction
 ‘you have caused me, it is in my hands to
 ‘repay you many fold.’

‘I fear you not, Fitz Alwy!—The God
 ‘of justice, the guardian angels my pro-
 ‘tectors, my own resolution, and my peo-
 ‘ple’s hearts,—form a rampart of safety
 ‘around me, that even *you* cannot over-
 ‘come. Know you not that a thousand
 ‘swords shall be uplifted over you, to re-
 ‘venge and to restore me? Know you not
 ‘that my banner shall soon wave beneath
 ‘your proud turrets—to give you timely
 ‘warning, that it shall soon float on their
 ‘towers?—Know you not, Baron, that an
 ‘angel, who in *earthly* hero’s form, hath
 ‘oft-times made *thee* tremble, shall fight
 ‘my cause?—Think you I shall long re-
 ‘main *your* victim?’

‘Insolent woman! — perdition! mad-
 ‘ness!’ (cried the exasperated Baron, as
 he advanced and struck the Baroness a
blow!)

blow !)—For a moment it deprived her of sense, and Fitz Alwy even, ashamed of himself, rushed from the apartment.

Each day he persecuted her anew, but he opposed himself to a soul of god-like magnanimity ! Ethelburga smiled at his threats, and silently pointed to the banner of Eustace, which waved majestically over the moor below.

During the above transactions, the good and venerable Earl of Thanet, and Sir Eustacius de Mont Rose, lingered out their miserable existence in separate dungeons. This confinement soon produced upon the Earl a tedious and dangerous malady, for old age and sorrow rendered him ill able to support such harsh imprisonment.

Alas ! poor old man ! his life had been a series of misfortunes, seldom to be met with. At an early age he had espoused a lovely and virtuous Italian lady ; Hymen lit his torch at the altar of love, and their happiness and tender passion was unequalled ;

qualled ; a year after his marriage, he was
 blessed by a daughter, and now nothing
 was wanting to complete his bliss. At
 this time his Monarch intrusted him with
 a secret commission, which occasioned
 him to take a journey of some distance ;
 he pressed his Floriana and his little infant
 to his affectionate heart, and with the keen-
 est sorrow bade them farewell. Alas ! in
 this world they were destined never more
 to meet ! He performed the business en-
 trusted to his care, and had set out on his
 return, when he met an ancient domestic of
 the Countess, who informed him that his
 lady had been carried away from her home
 with her infant child, and that no tidings
 of them could be discovered. The wretched
 husband flew to his home ; in vain did he en-
 deavour to discover the author of his injuries,
 or the abode of his wife, and had nearly re-
 signed the investigation, and sunk into a
 fit of despair, when he was accidentally be-
 nighted in a dark forest. A violent storm
 had

had arisen, when flashes of lightning disclosed to him the near turrets of a castle. On approaching it, he found it to be a ruin, seemingly deserted. He and his esquire, however, sought shelter within its desolate walls.—They had entered it with difficulty, and Fitz Hubert at length succeeded in striking a light.—On surveying the ruinous hall, they were surprised to see ashes, which had evidently been lately lit, laying on the floor ; and they thought it expedient to explore the place in which they sought repose. The Earl had plunged himself into wretchedness, and seated himself by the warm embers ; he had crossed his arms over his breast, and remained gazing on the ashes, while Fitz Hubert had departed with a flaming brand, in order to make a survey of the place. Some minutes sat the Earl lost to himself, when a distant door opening, aroused him ; and he arose to rake together the fire, when looking up, he saw, in the opening of a door at his back, a
face

face earnestly regarding him,—it was in the gloom, however, he could not distinguish, and he called ‘Hubert.’—The face instantly disappeared, and the Earl, aroused, drew his sword, and seizing a brand from the fire, hastened in pursuit. — His intended purpose, however, was arrested by the quick entrance of his esquire with his sword drawn, and his countenance greatly agitated.—

‘Let us depart, my Lord!’ (he said); ‘this place is not safe, it is infested with ‘murderers.’—Fitz Hubert appeared violently agitated;—the Earl, struck by his manner, and the dismay and horror pictured in his face, (for Fitz Hubert was no dastard), asked him what he had seen? The esquire, however, evaded his questions, and while they were conversing, the face which had before appeared, was seen again to peep through the door-way; the Earl immediately rushed forward, the man retreated, the Earl pursued, and at length overtook

overtook him ; upon which the assassin aimed at him an ineffectual blow, and in a few moments received his death-wound, from the sword of Fitz Hubert.—

‘ Do you think, Hubert, there are more banditti infesting this spot?’ (said the Earl.)

‘ Yes,’ (replied his esquire), ‘ this is evidently *not* the man who attacked me ; but come, my Lord, let us depart this place,—the dawn already begins to illuminate these dismal chambers.’

Hubert’s manner was singularly agitated, he regarded his master with looks of compassionate concern. They now endeavoured to find their way out of the Castle, but had bewildered themselves, and Hubert appeared astonishingly anxious to press on before his master ; they wandered for some time in the intricacies of the Castle, and day-light already rendered each object perceptible, when they arrived at the foot of a staircase, which led to a tower above ;

Hubert

Hubert immediately stopped, and as Thanet began to ascend, pulled him back with the utmost emotions of alarm.

‘Hubert,’ (said the Earl), ‘there is some mystery here, which you are anxious to conceal from me; but what can affect a mind wounded as mine is by the keenest anguish!—’

The wretched nobleman rushed up the staircase,—when an object arrested his step, and palsied every fibre of his frame—a scarf, which he had given to his adored Floriana, lay on the stairs steeped in blood,—and a wide track of blood leading to the rooms above, shewed that it had been dragged by some person into this situation, and had then been thrown aside. Agony and horror for a moment rooted him to the spot,—at length he rushed forward, following the track of blood, until arriving at a high-canopied bed, he fell senseless over the putrid body of his Countess.—Alas! too well was she

even now distinguished by her luxuriant and beautiful hair, which, clotted with gore, hung over her livid countenance.

For some time, Hubert essayed in vain to bring him to his senses; and when he at length succeeded, the wretched Earl yielded to all the agonies of his heart.—

‘Thou art not unrevenged!’ said his faithful esquire, who arose and brought to him a horrid object.—It was a hand just severed from the arm; it appeared the hand of some noble or knight of beautiful proportion, and whose third finger was adorned by a most beautiful gem.—

‘This, my Lord, must surely belong to
 ‘your enemy, be he whom he may, for
 ‘this hand belongeth not to one of ignoble
 ‘birth.—When I left you, sir, lost in melan-
 ‘choly reflection, I pursued my way through
 ‘the Castle, until I arrived at the staircase
 ‘we have just passed;—the same dread
 ‘object caught my view; and a groan broke
 ‘from

‘ from my bosom ; at this moment I heard
 ‘ retreating footsteps in this room, and,
 ‘ rushing forward, soon found myself at-
 ‘ tacked,—my torch at this moment became
 ‘ almost extinguished, and I heard a groan
 ‘ from my opponent, who instantly fled.—As
 ‘ I pursued him, I stumbled, my torch
 ‘ dropped, but for a minute rekindled, and
 ‘ disclosed to my view this bleeding limb,
 ‘ which lay at my feet.’—

As Hubert ceased, the Earl sprung from the body of his wife, and, inattentive to the entreaties of his esquire, rushed in pursuit of the unknown. Vain, however was his pursuit ; and after many hours fruitless search, he was obliged to quit the ruin. Thus the catastrophe closed ; no scrutiny could discover the vile author of his injuries, the perpetrators of this horrid deed. No inquiries procured for him any intelligence of his lost infant,—and he lived a miserable example of unmerited suffering and of injured worth.

The Earl, in the dismal apartments of Mont Eagle, found all his griefs renewed, and he bewailed his fate, in tones of the most touching woe; tears coursed each other down his furrowed face, and oh! surely if there is a tear more touching than another, one which commands a more hallowed veneration, it is that which bathes an injured old man's cheek!

He had sunk wearied and exhausted one night upon his melancholy bed, the faded curtains were unclosed, and his lamp burning dimly upon the table, scarcely illumined the dark recesses of his chamber. A pannel concealed in the wall, was slowly undrawn without the slightest noise, and awakened not the sleeping Earl. A dark figure came from the aperture—it hesitated, then softly approached the bed.—All was still; and the Monk Ignatius with cautious footstep approached the table,—he touched a secret spring, when a drawer flew out,—from it he took a packet and
papers,

papers, and having deposited them in his bosom, prepared to depart. The Earl's sleep became disturbed, he cried, he wept, he struggled, and then awaking, cried—

‘ Oh Floriana ! Floriana !—thy image
 ‘ haunts my fancy ; oh ! beloved child !
 ‘ murdered wife, art thou now in Heaven ?
 ‘ canst thou see my anguish ? but soon
 ‘ shall I join thee !’

As he ceased, the Monk uttered a deep groan and fell senseless on the bed.—Thanet started up, and seized a dagger which he had accidentally found in his prison chamber, but on perceiving that the object which had caused his alarm, was older and more helpless than himself, he arrested his uplifted hand, and stretched it forward to assist him. As he hung over him, the Monk looked up, the expression of his countenance agitated the bosom of the Earl with feelings of dreadful import.—

‘ My prayers are heard, O God, I
 ‘ thank.

‘thank thee,—still may I make some
‘atonement to this injured man.’

‘Father,’ (said the Earl), ‘compose
‘yourself,—your senses wander ; you never
‘injured me ; before this I never saw you,
‘for if I had, most assuredly I had not for-
‘gotten you.’

The most violent emotions agitated the
Monk ; his dark eye beamed forth a glance,
fraught with awful and mysterious mean-
ing, appalled the soul of the Earl, who
could scarcely support his looks ; at length
he replied—

‘Alas ! I am beyond injury ; I have met
‘with such unmerited misfortunes, I have
‘been so peculiarly wretched, that nothing
‘now has power to touch my soul.’

‘Surely you will never forgive those in-
‘juries,’—murmured the agitated Monk.—
The Earl’s countenance beamed with emo-
tion.

‘Oh speak, mysterious man !’ (he said),
‘thou hast some secret in thy keeping,
‘whose

‘ whose dreadful import would harrow up
 ‘ my soul !’

‘ The wretched Ignatius raised his eyes
 to those of the Earl, their mutual glances
 were terrible.—The power of the basilisk
 seemed to rivet them,—not a murmur broke
 from their lips, but the throbbing of
 Thanet’s heart was plainly heard. — Ig-
 natius now slowly elevated his crucifix
 between the Earl and himself, - - - - -
 and from his cloak upheld—a handless
 arm!! - - - - -

‘ At length! at length! have I dis-
 ‘ covered thee? Oh! cursed!—damned vil-
 ‘ lain!’—cried the Earl in tones of mad-
 ness and desperation, while he made a
 stroke at Ignatius, with the dagger he
 held in his hand; the crucifix, however,
 warded off the blow, and the eye of the
 Monk resting on the dagger, a new sen-
 sation of horror and dismay seemed to
 seize upon his frame, and sinking on his
 knee,

knee, he concealed his countenance in his vest, and cried in frantic tones,—

‘Almighty God! the dagger of Fitzalan in the hand of Thanet, - - - oh! mercy, mercy!’—and he sunk upon the floor.

Thanet flung the dagger from him; he approached not the wretched Monk, who lay senseless; but paced the room in agonies, which might defy the power of language to express. At length the long-protracted insensibility of Ignatius, seemingly the insensibility of death, aroused some slight emotions of pity in his bosom; but when he approached him, in order to offer assistance, the handless arm met his gaze, and plunged him again into a fit of insanity.—At length, low groans broke from the bosom of Ignatius, Thanet approached him, and stood brandishing the dirk over his head, till the Monk feebly casting himself before him, cried in suppliant tones,—

‘Oh! mercy, thou injured man!—I am
‘not

‘not quite so guilty as thou believest me.—
‘Thanet, thy daughter lives! spare my
‘life, and I will restore her to thee.’

These words tenderly affected the Earl, tears of joy burst from his eyes, and seeing the horror of Ignatius at the sight of the dagger, he flung it from him with violence.

CHAP. XII.

" His fair side is exposed ; half bent he foresees his death.
Darkness gathered on Eltha's soul.
The tear rolled down her cheek. - - - - -
- - - - -

Let dark Cuthullin yield to me the ancient throne of
Cormar ; or Erin's torrents shall show from their hills
The red foam of the blood of his pride !"

Ossian.

FITZ Alwy, involved in a world of troubles, felt but little relieved from the possession of Ethelburga's person. Eustace had raised an army already to attack him, and planted his threatening banners in such a position, that Fitz Alwy, from the windows of his own apartments, could not fail to have his eyes blasted by the sight of them.

His

His troops, although assembled in the Castle to protect it, were indifferent to his welfare; some of them were more than indifferent, for Fitz Alwy's character and violent conduct had rendered him unpopular, while Eustace was regarded as a deity.

Thus situated, he found his spirits sadly depressed, a dread which he could not account for, clouded his mind, and he felt himself but ill able to oppose his virtuous and valorous cousin. Eustace no sooner had roused his mind from the despair into which the loss of his mistress had cast him, than agony gave it a forced and renewed vigour, and feeling fully conscious of the necessity of instant exertion, he had pursued his measures with the utmost promptitude and resolution.

The minions of Fitz Alwy, saw his despondency with terror, and in his, they feared their own destruction. Numerous were the chiefs encamped under the banner
of

of Eustace, and to complete Fitz Alwy's dismay, he learnt that the Abbot Bertrand had dispatched a messenger to the King, and had interested in his cause, all the great Nobles, and Barons of Northumberland.

Ithona, always officious in offering his advice, declared, that Ethelburga should immediately be forced into a marriage with Fitz Alwy, and which Sebastian was ever ready to perform. And he then proposed that should they seize Eustace, and threaten her to put him to death, should she still refuse to bestow on Mont Eagle her hand ; this he recommended as the only inducement which could subdue the proud, determined spirit of the Baroness.

The idea of having Eustace in his power, greatly delighted Fitz Alwy, and they instantly devised a stratagem, which succeeded but too well. Fitz Osborne, who now resided at Mont Eagle, one of the chozen favourites of Fitz Alwy, was selected to

to be the instrument of their design ; he wandered amongst the woods which surrounded the Castle, in front of the lines occupied by Eustace ; while a chosen band of two hundred men attended him, in concealment. No sooner did he perceive any of the Wolfnorth retainers, than he appeared to be skulking from their sight ; Henry Mortimer, rash and thoughtless as his master, no sooner saw him, than he hastened back to the camp, and informed young Stanley, and, without considering the danger which lurked in the woods of their enemy, eagerly informed Sir Eustace, who flew to the spot. Fitz Osborne suffered himself to be taken prisoner ;—but as they were preparing to depart with their prize, they were surrounded by the concealed vassals of Fitz Alwy—and the brave, the noble Eustace ! was ignominiously dragged into the dungeons of Mont Eagle, and there loaded with heavy
irons ;

irons ; while the unfortunate Stanley shared a similar fate.

Fitz Alwy felt his spirits exhilarated by the possession of his cousin ; but such was his awe of this magnanimous youth, that even in his dungeon he feared to approach him.

Once more he repaired to the apartment of Ethelburga ; his undaunted air of triumph alarmed her, but she hesitated not a moment in repeating her refusal.

‘ ’Tis well,’ (replied the Baron), ‘ a little while, lady, and thou wilt be the suppliant.’—And he departed from the chamber.

Now did this heartless man order the chapel to be prepared for their nuptials ; it was gaily adorned, ’tis true, profuse magnificence was lavished upon its decorations ; but it was impossible to divest the mind of the idea, that it was prepared for a sacrifice ; while the enemy’s brazen trumpet

pet rung the Castle's stout walls, --- the organ pealed through the air, the sonorous trumpet of war mingled with its melancholy strains, and created a discord that affrighted and enhorror'd the imagination.

Fitz Alwy vainly endeavoured to rouse his spirits into vigour and animation by the night's carousal ; his spirits were forced and boisterous, and he could ill account to himself for the depression of his mind. He performed all his actions like a man who, by hurrying from himself, imagines he can banish his reflections from his own mind, and conceal them from others ; and as he commanded Father Sebastian to the Chapel, Ithona and De Wilton marked with surprise the ashy paleness of his cheek. The comfortless state of things within the Castle, was redoubled by the confusion which reigned without ; the men were all under arms, waiting in momentary expectation of an attack ; for the friends of Eustace no sooner heard of his seizure, than, inspired
by

by fury and indignation, they led their forces up to the Castle walls. Fitz Alwy felt that not a moment was to be lost, and looked for safety alone in being able to display Ethelburga to his enemies as his bride. Determined to put his purpose into instant execution, he sent to the imprisoned beauty the most costly apparel, and desired that she would array herself as became his bride. She received his command with a smile of contempt, and heard with triumphant joy, that her friends approached her prison walls. Alas! she knew not that her amiable and gallant lover,—he, on whom she rested all her hopes!—was cast into a wretched dungeon, loaded with fetters, exhausting his indignant soul in the bitterest agony.

As she entered the magnificent Church, its gay decorations sickened her soul; the organ sung loud and melancholy, and her faltering step alone sounded on the wide pavement; she marked the Baron approach her,

her, and haughtily motioned him with her hand, and forbade him to proceed.

‘ Dare not to profane this sacred place, my Lord, by such a deed as this :—
 ‘ Avaunt ! hard-hearted man, and know,
 ‘ the Baroness of Falconberg is not to
 ‘ be moved by threats, or subdued by violence.’

As she ceased, a voice in a distant part of the Chapel reached her ear and arrested her breath ; her eye caught the well-known figure, as she rushed forward and sunk on the bosom of Fitz Aubrey. His wan cheek, his sunken eye, the heavy chains which confined his legs and arms, the gloomy ruffians who stood by his side watching their prey with scowling deliberate looks, — all these evidences of Fitz Alwy’s cruelty, struck the heart of Ethelburga with anguish and abhorrence. He turned from her accusing glance, a weak pang of shame at his ineffectual cruelty darted through his heart, and he felt more subdued

subdued than the victims of his vice ; gathering a slight degree of firmness in his voice, he pointed to Fitz Aubrey.---

‘ This is thy work, Ethelburga,—hadst
 ‘ thou obeyed thy father’s will, hadst
 ‘ thou listened to the voice of filial duty,
 ‘ Fitz Aubrey had been free : — Repent,
 ‘ Ethelburga ! and let me take the man-
 ‘ cles from the person of your friend.’ —

‘ Specious villain !’ (returned Ethelburga with generous indignation) ‘ and dost
 ‘ thou think an act like *this*, is likely to
 ‘ make me alter the determination I have
 ‘ already formed ? But thou hast judged ill,
 ‘ Fitz Alwy, and acted with a weak-sighted
 ‘ intemperance, which one day thou wilt
 ‘ regret ;—little dost thou know the being,
 ‘ this just and generous man has reared
 ‘ the soul Fitz Aubrey trained to virtue
 ‘ shrinks each hour more enhorror’d at th
 ‘ offer of forming an alliance with vice.

‘ No, Lord Mont Eagle, by crying
 ‘ thou never wilt obtain thy wishes !’

‘ My child, my Ethelburga ! thou art indeed a Falconberg, and now repayest all my tender care ! ’ cried the Warden, overpowered by his feelings, as he pressed the youthful heroine to his breast.

‘ Part them ! ’ cried the enraged Fitz Alvy ; his villains, dragged them asunder ; and seizing the hand of Ethelburga, he dragged her to the altar, and cried to the attending Monk —

‘ Conclude this scene, Sebastian, quickly pronounce the ceremony. ’ — The struggling Ethelburga cast upon him a look of astonishment and disgust — then turning to Sebastian —

‘ Holy Father, I solemnly protest against this marriage ; perform it not, as you respect yon sacred image of the Saviour of mankind ! ’

The organ sent forth loud strains, and almost overpowered the sound of her voice, whose suppliant and energetic tones would have melted the hardest heart. But now
the

the trumpet shouted from below ; it was a blast recognized by Ethelburga and Sir Philip, as the blast of the men of Falconberg ; she clasped her hands, and uttered a mental ejaculation for their success. She still persisted in not approaching the altar. The trumpet brayed again, and Sir Bevis entered the Chapel in a disordered manner ; he approached and whispered to the Baron, whose countenance grew darker.

‘ No more ! no more ! ’ (he passionately exclaimed) ‘ Then lady, since thou still refusest to me your hand, you have unwittingly pronounced sentence of death upon thy minion ; beware ! and mark me ! ’—he seized a horn from Ithona and blew it thrice,—a confused noise of quick steps was heard, and Ethelburga started with a fearful cry, as the noble form of Eustace was dragged forward by four gigantic ruffians, who each led him by a massive chain under whose weight he bowed not.

‘ My love ! my hero ! ’---cried the distracted

tracted mistress of the gallant youth; she outstretched to him her fair arms and sunk on the pavement. Fitz Alwy flew to her, but the soul of Eustace now on fire, and bursting with madness and indignation, broke forth:---

‘Insatiate villain! profane not that angelic virtue by thy contaminated breath,’ (he struggled violently) ‘Ethelburga, oh! ‘Ethelburga!’—he cried in a voice of agony. His tones recalled her to life, when seeing her fond regards turned upon him, he continued—

‘Dear angelic being! sainted, injured ‘Ethelburga! let not yon monstrous villain intimidate thy noble soul! and oh ‘my love! believe that any tortures thy ‘Eustace can endure, are unfelt, compared ‘with those which would wring his heart at ‘the sacrifice of thyself.—Oh! Ethelburga, ‘spare me!’

‘Cease!’ cried the Baron.

‘Tremble!’



‘ Tremble !’ — replied the undaunted youth.

‘ Know, Ethelburga,’ (continued Fitz Alwy), ‘ that on thy actions depend the life of your favourite, it is forfeited if you refuse me, yield me your hand—and he is free.’

Eustace cast on her so expressive a glance, that she faintly though firmly replied :—

‘ Yes, Eustace ! I obey thee—for the stroke which robs thee of thy dear life, re-unites us for ever. No, my hero ! thy Ethelburga will not survive thee !’

‘ Insupportable !’ (cried Fitz Alwy almost choked with passion) ‘ Father, once more proceed ! sacred was the bequest of her parent, and a father’s will is definitive.’

Sebastian opened the Holy Volume, as Fitz Alwy firmly grasped the hand of Ethelburga, and forced her to the altar, while the struggling Eustace was retained only by the utmost force from rushing to her.—

‘ You

‘ You shall be obeyed, my Lord,’ (said Sebastian) ‘ a Father’s will is, as you say, definitive !’

An awful, hollow voice pronounced from the furthest aisle—

‘ A Father’s will is definitive !’—

It seemed to come from the tombs of his ancestors. Fitz Alwy stood for a moment appalled ; while Sir Philip, whose weakest feeling was touched, exclaimed in a voice of despondency :—

‘ Alas ! my poor child, the son of Osmond and the daughter of Ethelred must be united !’

‘ The son of Osmond and the daughter of Ethelred SHALL be united !’ murmured loudly through the awful place—every heart beat violently with expectation—as a tall figure in dark robes stalked from the aisle, it approached, faced the altar, and gazed upon Fitz Alwy. — His glance seemed to have upon the haughty Baron a mysterious effect---he stood trembling and appalled ;

appalled ; Ithona groaned, and concealed his face in his mantle ; Sebastian supported himself against the altar in the utmost agitation. At length the monk threw back his cowl, and disclosed his dreadful countenance, turning to Fitz Aubrey he mournfully said :—

‘ Canst thou not, Philip Fitz Aubrey, recall to thy mind the original of this faded form ?—Regard me !’

Fitz Aubrey considered him with the utmost horror and amazement, at length in tremulous accents he exclaimed : ‘ Al-
mighty God ! do I not view the shade
of Leofwin Lord Fitz Arnulf ?’—

‘ *Himself* you view, Fitz Aubrey !’—groaned forth the Monk. Eustace, who had broken from the ruffians during the mysterious scene, cast himself at the feet of the Monk, who, exhibiting the utmost agitation, drew back.

‘ Oh ! no, no, no—let me rather kneel to thee, and implore pardon for thy in-
juries---

juries.—*Thou art the son of Osmond!!!*
 ‘----- and oh! accursed truth! *There*
 ‘stands my son!’----- as the tortured
 monk, turning with disgust from Fitz
 Alwy, pointed to him with an emaciated
 finger-----.

Astonishment locked each tongue—
 They gazed upon each other.—A lover’s
 heart alone can tell—what where the feel-
 ings of Eustace, and his Ethelburga!—A
 glance of mingled tenderness and rapture,
 was exchanged in silence, when a shower of
 burning tears flowed from their eyes. At
 length Fitz Alwy, aroused from his lethar-
 gy, felt all the destruction the revelation of
 of this astonishing secret had brought down
 upon him, and, without daring to lift his
 eyes upon the monk, he cried haughtily:—

‘And oh! thou bold impostor, how wilt
 ‘thou prove this fact?—’Tis well to frame
 ‘a tale specious enough for thy employers
 ‘to feign their belief in,—but that is not
 ‘enough for me!’

‘ Thinkest thou, my son, I so little
 ‘ knew thee as to venture a confession
 ‘ such as this, without being enabled fully
 ‘ to confirm it?—ah! no; wretch that I
 ‘ am, I know my son too well. Sir Hil-
 ‘ debrand—and thou, accursed Ithona! in-
 ‘ stigator of all my crimes, villain! mon-
 ‘ ster! thou *dost* know the wretch thy
 ‘ pernicious counsels have cast into ever-
 ‘ lasting destruction!’ As Ignatius uttered
 the last words, his countenance assumed
 a look of phrenzy, and appalled every be-
 holder. Eustace, who had found with his
 returning presence the knowledge of all
 his happiness, flung himself at the feet of
 his mistress.

‘ Now dare I claim my worshipped
 ‘ Ethelburga! her Eustace may proudly
 ‘ proclaim the adoration of his heart, with-
 ‘ out dishonouring her!’

‘ Oh my Eustace!’ (she replied, and
 bathed him with her tears)—‘ nothing can
 ‘ ennoble you more than nature has done!

‘ Nothing

‘ Nothing can render me so honourable as
 ‘ your affection ! Nothing—no, nothing can
 ‘ render you more dear to me than your-
 ‘ self !——’

‘ This is thy work, accursed Monk !’
 cried the frenzied Fitz Alwy ; and before
 any one surrounding could perceive his in-
 tentions, the monster—the damned, hard-
 hearted, unnatural monster, plunged his
 poisoned dagger in the heart of his wretched
 Father ! - - - - -

A shriek from Ethelburga, who sunk sense-
 less on the steps of the altar, seemed to
 appall him. The wretched Ignatius had
 expired in the moment.

‘ Oh prodigy of hell !’ exclaimed the
 shuddering Eustace, as he rushed to Fitz
 Alwy, and felled him to the earth—but
 alas ! his guards, aroused by the act, in-
 stantly seized the noble youth, and dragged
 him with barbarous violence from the
 altar.

At this moment loud blasts of the trumpet,

M 2

from

from below, again aroused the monstrous Fitz Alwy, and turning to Ethelburga, he seized her hand, and dragged her to the altar.

‘ Hold, barbarian !’ (cried Sir Philip Fitz Aubrey) ‘ dare not to touch my child ;
‘ thinkest thou, because thy hellish machi-
‘ nations have deprived the noble son of
‘ Osmond of his liberty, that thou shalt
‘ rob him of his destined bride ?’

‘ Oh never ! never !’—emphatically pronounced Ethelburga, as she extended her arms to her struggling lover.

‘ That barrier shall soon be removed !—’ (cried the Baron of Mont Eagle, with a savage laugh) ‘ Ithona, let the executioners
‘ perform their duty.’

The ruffians instantly advanced, and tore open the vestment of young Eustace ; a bosom fairer than snow, and more beautifully delicate than that of young Narcissus, was disclosed ; while Ithona uplifted his horrid dirk, and grinned his inhuman purpose.

‘ Now

‘ Now Ethelburga, behold the end to all
 ‘ your hopes, and all my fears ; instantly
 ‘ pronounce your vows, or see the dagger
 ‘ of Ithona drink the heart’s blood of your
 ‘ minion !’

‘ Never ! oh never, mine adored !’ (cried
 the undaunted youth) ‘ ten thousand
 ‘ wounds, inflicted by the steel of Fitz
 ‘ Alwy, would be unfelt ; but thou, my
 ‘ Ethelburga ! thou would’st not stab me
 ‘ to the heart, with deepest agony !’

The magnanimous heroine, pale and speechless, turned her languid glances upon his interesting form ; his heart throbbed well nigh to bursting, and she riveted her gaze upon his bosom, when the well-known initial of her name proved undeniably his birth. — Anguish and horror, however, chained her tongue ; every moment did she expect to see her lover murdered, and expiring before her eyes ; and she felt that such a scene would put a speedy end to her existence.

Fitz

Fitz Alwy now prepared to give the signal—a wild shriek broke from the bosom of Ethelburga: she flew to her lover, and enclosed him in her trembling arms—she was torn from him, and dragged back by her detestable persecutors - - - - - Loud cries and shouts burst through the Castle; and De Wilton, pale and bloody, with his sword drawn, rushed into the chapel.

‘We are lost, Baron! we are lost!—’ he cried as he staggered forward, and fell lifeless on the pavement: the words, however, had scarcely passed his lips, when Sir Ethelred of Montrose, followed by Lord de Lucy, Sir Oscar, and Sir Vortimer, entered. —Instantly Fitz Alwy drew his sword, and in a moment, with all his attendants, were engaged: Ithona, at a signal from him, made an attempt to plunge his dagger in the bosom of Eustace; but Ethelburga, who every moment expected this stroke, effectually

effectually warded off the blow, and Sir Oscar instantly attacked him.

By this time, a numerous troop of Sir Eustace's followers entered the fatal place; they were headed by Sir Hildebrand, who, approaching him, freed him from his fetters, and presented him a sword.—Fitz Alwy, seeing him unfettered, set up a cry of fury, and they instantly engaged, when Eustace cried aloud—

‘ Hold, my brave friends, let us decide the combat !’

Every arm was dropped in respectful attention while they engaged: vain were every effort to describe this dreadful scene! it was horribly magnificent:—the altar, the sacred altar, was dyed with the blood of ruffians! the sainted crucifix, profaned by the sight of the most horrible of crimes! but not unpunished was the barbarous parricide; whose wretched, murdered parent, ghastly and breathless, lay trampled on the steps of the altar—The sword of Eustace
drank

drank Fitz Alwy's life blood, and cut short his guilty, his villanous career!!——

At the view of his defeat, his vassals broke through the momentary truce; carnage reigned throughout the Castle, and the death of Ithona by the hand of Fitz Aubrey closed this dreadful scene.

Ethelburga had lain for some time, insensible, on the altar steps where she had fallen with uplifted hands; but the soothing caresses of her beloved Eustace soon restored her to life: he hung over her in his blood-stained apparel, with pale and anxious looks; he clasped her to his throbbing bosom, she revived in an agony of tears.

Sir Philip Fitz Aubrey, and her noble lover, the only Lord Fitz Alwy—the real Ethelmorne—led her from this horrid scene; and the first joy which illumined her breast, was the view of the banner of Eustace, waving o'er the towers of Mont Eagle!

Sir Philip related to his friends, the
wonderful

' led me by a subterraneous passage to the
 ' cell he had so long inhabited ; here we
 ' were joined by Sir Hildebrand, who, like-
 ' wise begged my pardon, for the part of
 ' jailor, which he had been obliged to per-
 ' form. He expressed his hatred of Fitz
 ' Alwy, and his determination to free you
 ' from his grasp ; and he now declared to
 ' Leofwin, that it would be necessary in-
 ' stantly to admit your friends, as you were
 ' to be dragged to the Chapel on the fol-
 ' lowing night, to be made a witness to his
 ' nuptials with Ethelburga ; and it was
 ' then his intention, to have had you se-
 ' cretly murdered in the Castle. We ac-
 ' cordingly set out for the camp, where
 ' you may guess the surprise our presence
 ' created. An anxiety I could not resist to
 ' embrace my child, led me instantly to
 ' Elfwold---Little, I believe, is to be added ;
 ' Sir Hildebrand, who watched his oppor-
 ' tunity when Fitz Alwy and his minions
 ' were in the Church, admitted your friends
 ' by

‘ by a private entrance, and caused them
 ‘ to come so opportunely to your res-
 ‘ cue ; while, in the mean time, your brave
 ‘ vassals stormed the Castle without, and
 ‘ placed your banner on the walls. That
 ‘ you are the only legal possessor of Mont
 ‘ Eagle, and the husband destined by Lord
 ‘ Falconberg for his child, I have no doubt ;
 ‘ and as I well know the ardent affection
 ‘ you entertain for each other, the disclo-
 ‘ sure yields me the most unbounded satis-
 ‘ faction. These papers contain every infor-
 ‘ mation, but likewise such horrid disco-
 ‘ veries, that I beg they may be perused in
 ‘ secret.—Lord de Lucy must not be wound-
 ‘ ed by the knowledge of the fate of his
 ‘ poor sister, in whose absence I would
 ‘ advise their perusal.’

The Earl ceased ; and it was settled,
 that on the following day, in the apart-
 ments of the Abbot, they should be exa-
 mined.

Eustace now with fond extacy pressed
 his

his mistress to his bosom, and they each retired to their couches, with hearts beating with the purest and most unalloyed delight ever tasted by mortals.

CHAP. XIII.

The Confessions
of
Æthelwin, Lord Fitz Arnulf.

“ MYSTERIOUS are thy ways, all-seeing
“ God ! inevitable the punishment of the
“ guilty, however uncertainly protracted
“ may seem the reward of the virtuous.

“ Horror, anguish, and despair, alone
“ dwell with me in this dire abode : my
“ crimes have been fruitless, barren in
“ every thing but wretchedness and re-
“ morse.

“ Oh Ethelmorne ! my tenderly beloved
“ son, and are you destined to be the most
“ poignant

“ poignant instrument of chastisement and
 “ vengeance, to thy miserable parent ? Oh
 “ Ethelmorne, have you no filial love or
 “ pity, no mercy ? Are you determined to
 “ hurry into a dreadful eternity the soul of
 “ thy guilty parent—to hasten him into
 “ that hell, from which there is no redemp-
 “ tion ?

“ Repent ere 'tis too late ! remember
 “ that you are an usurper, an impostor—
 “ that you are in possession of the rights of
 “ another—that you are not the son of Os-
 “ mond ! Your soul seems naturalized to
 “ murder ; I, with all my manifold sins,
 “ gaze upon you with astonishment ; mine
 “ were the errors of passion ; yours are
 “ calm, deliberated enormities : but oh !
 “ if you have a single feeling of compunc-
 “ tion, arrest your guilty course, listen to
 “ my history, and take warning by my
 “ bitter fate.

“ I was naturally neither wicked or
 “ cruel ; with burning tears can I recol-
 “ lect

"lect the days of my innocence, and
 "mourn over my estrangement from vir-
 "tue; ceaseless are the reproaches of my
 "heart, to those who by harshness and
 "injustice perverted its better feelings,
 "and made me what, alas! I am.

"Your grandfather, Ethelmorne, Baron
 "of Mont Eagle, and Lord Fitz Arnulf,
 "possessed many virtues and many graces;
 "but he was passionate, fickle, and
 "thoughtless: he married when young
 "my mother Elizabeth, and the daughter
 "of Lord Macferline. I was the fruit of
 "these nuptials, and for three years I was
 "his darling, and his heir. At this time,
 "(whether *with* or without reason, it
 "matters not, — the dire effects are the
 "same to me)—my mother was repu-
 "diated, my very birth cast into igno-
 "miny, or at least into doubt, and I was
 "suffered to remain in my father's Castle,
 "an object of pity and aversion. To com-
 "plete my injuries, my father married
 "again

“ again to Rosamond the daughter of
 “ Lord Hereford, and by her he had my
 “ brother Osmond. My step-mother was
 “ certainly kind to me, of her I can make
 “ no complaints ; but my infant mind con-
 “ sidered her son as the usurper of my
 “ rights, and conceived a hatred which
 “ no time or circumstances could ame-
 “ liorate.

“ My father did not conceal his pre-
 “ ference to Osmond, which increased my
 “ dislike to my brother, although that
 “ brother, alas ! loved me tenderly. But
 “ though these circumstances had created
 “ a dislike to him, it was a harmless one,
 “ nor did I ever in my childhood conceive
 “ plots against him. As I grew up, my fa-
 “ ther’s unjust preference became more ma-
 “ nifest ; every body praised my beauty and
 “ the elegance of my deportment, but my
 “ countenance was clouded by melancholy,
 “ and my spirits oppressed by injustice.

“ It would have been wiser of my fa-
 “ ther,

“ ther, to have totally disowned me, and
 “ suffered me to have been brought up
 “ in happy ignorance of my birth ; but no
 “ sooner was I of age, than the ill-judging
 “ man bestowed on me the title and for-
 “ tress of Fitz Arnulf ; by which he ac-
 “ knowledged me his son, and at the same
 “ time tacitly proved his injustice in dis-
 “ owning me as his heir. Thus, the very
 “ means he took to satisfy me, only exas-
 “ perated my feelings, and what tended
 “ to drive me almost to madness was, that
 “ I felt myself robbed and injured ; I was
 “ pointed at by the surrounding country as
 “ the object of his liberality, his justice,
 “ and his benevolence.

“ When I could shake off the depres-
 “ sion of my spirits, my temper was liberal
 “ and generous almost to prodigality, and
 “ on my father’s giving me a handsome
 “ establishment, I went to the Court of
 “ England, which awakened all my taste
 “ for splendour and expence, and finally
 “ ended

“ ended in my ruin. I had long sighed
 “ to distinguish myself as a warrior, and
 “ and in the first campaign I engaged in,
 “ I won the most distinguished honours ;
 “ these intoxicated my mind, and dispelled
 “ the clouds on my disposition.

“ In the second exploit I performed, I
 “ became acquainted with Ithona - - -
 “ Oh ! Ethelmorne, beware of that de-
 “ stroyer of my soul—beware of Ithona !—
 “ His fame as a soldier, blinded me to his
 “ vices as a man, and I formed the closest
 “ connection with him. Our prodigality
 “ soon produced distress ; and he then
 “ advised me to oblige my father to make
 “ me a restitution of my rights. Inspired
 “ by his specious arguments, I set out for this
 “ purpose—the result was my banishment
 “ from his Castle, and my disgrace at home.

“ On my return to England, I was pre-
 “ sented to Fitzalan—a young man, whose
 “ virtues and whose graces were unequalled
 “ save by his angelic sister, the Lady
 “ Adelmorne

“ Adelmorne Montacute. No sooner did
 “ I see her, than the fiercest passion in-
 “ flamed me, and in the intelligence of her
 “ expressive eyes, I read the delightful con-
 “ viction that I was not beheld with aversion,
 “ and which I endeavoured to increase by
 “ every means in my power. Oh God ! how
 “ luckless was my fate ! had this most ar-
 “ dent passion been but fortunate, I might
 “ still have been guiltless ; for my love, my
 “ devotion to Adelmorne, would have hu-
 “ manized my soul, there would have been
 “ a current for my intemperate feelings to
 “ flow into, hallowed by nature, and ap-
 “ proved by reason.

“ Adelmorne, at the moment I first saw
 “ her, had been married scarcely a year to
 “ the young Lord Montacute, who, by no
 “ one virtue, merited so great a blessing.
 “ My designs upon Adelmorne, I will not
 “ deny, from the moment I saw her, were
 “ guilty ; I was determined to obtain her
 “ heart,

“ heart, or expire on the disappointment of
 “ my hopes ; her person had ravished my
 “ senses ; but as our intercourse increased,
 “ which Montacute’s conduct easily ad-
 “ mitted, I found the sensibility of her soul,
 “ and the amiable qualities of her mind, so
 “ bewitching, that the uninterrupted and
 “ sole possession of her became my dearest
 “ object. My passion was firm and set-
 “ tled ; nothing could be fairer than my
 “ fidelity to her, not even did a thought
 “ find birth in my mind, which could have
 “ yielded her one moment’s offence.

“ Alas ! Adelmorne’s only fault was,
 “ her love for me ; a fault, how easily ex-
 “ cused ! and which endeared her if possi-
 “ ble more strongly to my heart. I would
 “ willingly have followed the bold and
 “ open impulse of my bosom, and undis-
 “ guisedly have carried off the Lady Mon-
 “ tacute ; but Ithona whispered in my ear
 “ the prudence of delay, and taught me to
 “ hope, that in the affray Lord Montacute

“ was

“ was about to engage, he would lose his
 “ life, and open the way for me to claim
 “ the hand of my adored mistress.

“ Oh monster ! I have since discovered,
 “ that this attachment did not suit his pur-
 “ pose ; he had other views for me, more
 “ tending to promote his interests—besides
 “ being biassed by a flame, which he dared to
 “ feed in his diabolical heart for mine adored.

“ Montacute now left the south ; and
 “ during his absence, I succeeded in se-
 “ ducing the Lady Adelmorne to my arms :
 “ our intercourse was carried on with the
 “ utmost caution, for her brother was jea-
 “ lous of his honour, and by entwining
 “ myself closely around his unsuspecting
 “ heart alone, did I conceal the secret from
 “ his eyes.

“ Ithona hoped that time would every
 “ day weaken my attachment, but he was
 “ wrong ; my love increased every hour,
 “ and each succeeding pleasure seemed
 “ fuller than the last, making the heart
 “ more

“ more anxious for future bliss—Our pas-
 “ sion seemed to gather strength, and in-
 “ crease from gratification ; each day a
 “ trivial separation was felt more keenly,
 “ and we lived, but in the love-sick glances
 “ of each other’s eyes. Now was revealed
 “ to me, by the dear object of my passion,
 “ that a pledge of our mutual love was
 “ fast hastening to maturity ; I received
 “ the acknowledgment with a rapture I
 “ cannot easily express, and we swore this
 “ lovely innocent should be the bond of
 “ our everlasting love, and fidelity. I
 “ pressed my Adelmorne to my adoring
 “ heart, and obtained her promise to fly
 “ with me to some calm distant spot, where
 “ uninterruptedly we might enjoy each
 “ other, and the caresses of our infant.
 “ On several attempts that I had made, to
 “ endeavour to prevail on Ithona to assist
 “ us, I found his inclinations so totally op-
 “ posite to my wishes, that I determined to
 “ depart

“ depart without his knowledge, and we
 “ fled in secrecy.

“ One year, hid from the world’s officious
 “ gaze, we passed in a round of tender
 “ enjoyment, which certainly was never
 “ meant for the possession of mortals—
 “ Paradise, with all its boasted joys, cannot
 “ equal the perfect bliss of this regretted
 “ period ! Oh ! no, no, no !—For this do I
 “ pay the tribute to offended Heaven, for
 “ having sipped the dear forbidden cup of
 “ perfect, perfect bliss. During this ex-
 “ tatic year, you Ethelmorne were born ;
 “ my love for your mother increased, and
 “ still, my child, you shared with her the
 “ adoration of my enamoured heart. I in-
 “ dustriously concealed from her, the know-
 “ ledge I had obtained of her brother’s de-
 “ spair at her disappearance ; and she,
 “ having no wish beyond the tower we in-
 “ habited, sought not an intercourse with
 “ any human being. Another pledge of
 “ love was likely soon to bless me—Adel-

“ morne lay one day reclined in my arms,
 “ her lip was yet pressed to mine, and you,
 “ my infant, were innocently lying at her
 “ feet, when the door opened, and Fitzalan
 “ entered ; his eyes were inflamed with pas-
 “ sion, and he darted upon me looks of fury
 “ and revenge : Adelmorne uttered a pier-
 “ cing scream, and fell senseless from my
 “ arms.

“ ‘ Villain !’ (he exclaimed) ‘ accursed
 “ ‘ dishonourer of my house, die !’——He
 “ drew his sword ; the agonies of my Adel-
 “ morne inspired me with fury ; easily
 “ could I have subdued this brave but
 “ delicate young man—but, deaf to honour
 “ and to mercy, I rushed upon him, and
 “ wresting his dagger from his side, plunged
 “ it in his noble heart ! he fell, and without
 “ a sigh expired.

“ At this moment Adelmorne opened her
 “ eyes ; they fell upon the bleeding body of
 “ her brother, while my attitude too well
 “ explained the dreadful scene. Struck with
 “ horror

" horror, her eyes wandered wildly around,
 " and she exclaimed in a voice of agony—
 " ' Oh my Leofwin ! how couldst thou
 " ' do this deed ? '—Her frame became con-
 " vulsed — Oh God ! a few, a very few
 " hours, robbed me of my adored Adel-
 " morne for ever !——yes ! for ever !
 " Her unborn babe perished with her. - - -

" The phrenzy of that hour never will
 " be forgotten—despair hardened my heart
 " —agony blunted my feelings ! I became
 " ferocious ! - - - - -

" At this fatal crisis Ithona appeared ;
 " he dragged me from the corpse of Adel-
 " morne, and bade me provide for my safety.
 " I spurned his advice ; life to me was a
 " burthen, hateful to support, since the
 " smiles of my lost love no longer cheered
 " my soul : he presented *you*, Ethelmorne,
 " to my arms ; your likeness to your mo-
 " ther—your infant caress won me from
 " my despair ; I determined to live for

“ your sake: Oh! would to God that I
 “ had perished, a votive offering to the
 “ manes of my Adelmorne!

“ Revenge on Montacute—Montacute,
 “ who first possessed my love, now fired
 “ my soul, and inspired me with resolution
 “ to support my wretched life. I fled in
 “ the disguise of a monk, for already were
 “ the friends of Fitzalan in search of *me*;
 “ and taking my little son in my arms,
 “ I with some difficulty found my way to
 “ Mont Eagle; here I confided my infant
 “ to the care of Osmond my brother, and
 “ making my escape from his castle, I re-
 “ turned to the south, to steep my dagge
 “ in the blood of Montacute—He *died*
 “ in a forest hard by the capital.

“ The loss of my adored mistress ha
 “ created a change in my nature, which
 “ astonished even myself; every benevo-
 “ lent feeling of my heart was extinguished
 “ and I delighted but in the misery o
 “ others; wretched myself, I took a fero-
 “ cious

" cious delight in making others so ; and
 " the sight of connubial enjoyment drove
 " me into jealous distraction. Ithona
 " vainly endeavoured to soothe my trans-
 " ports ; but at length I sunk into a
 " gloomy and ferocious melancholy, more
 " destructive in its effects than my former
 " violent despair. It is incomprehensible
 " how I escaped the suspicions of the
 " families of Montacute, and Fitzalan :
 " from the hour I robbed the former of his
 " life, I was careless of my own ; I sought
 " not to avoid discovery, and to this utter
 " indifference, I believe I must attribute
 " my escape ; Providence seemed to take
 " of me peculiar care—why, I know not,
 " except to make me the scourge of man-
 " kind.

" I used more frequently to spend some
 " time at Mont Eagle, where my brother
 " Osmond strove every art to ameliorate
 " my grief. He had, during my absence,
 " married the Lady Editha ; and my
 " wretched-

“ wretchedness was encreased by the sight
 “ of their connubial bliss. You, my child,
 “ throve kindly under their protection ;
 “ and in pressing you to my heart, and
 “ tracing in your infant features some re-
 “ semblance to my lost Adelmorne, I alone
 “ became sensible of feelings which ought
 “ to inhabit the bosom of a man.

“ Ithona once more drew me to the
 “ court of England: oh monstrous villain!
 “ it was he who, envious of my happiness,
 “ and discontented at my banishment, dis-
 “ covered my retreat with your dear
 “ mother, and revealed us to Fitzalan.
 “ Ithona used to rally me on the fidelity I
 “ had ever maintained to the ashes of my
 “ wife ; and he one day declared to me,
 “ that he had found a lady in every parti-
 “ cular so resembling her, that he defied
 “ me to discover any dissimilarity in her
 “ person or manner. I reluctantly con-
 “ sented to be introduced to this lady, and
 “ in an unlucky hour I saw Floriana,
 “ Countess

“ Countess of Thanet. Oh! let me hurry
 “ over the dreadful transactions, which
 “ disgrace this horrid period of my life!
 “ Ithona had well studied the beauties of my
 “ departed love; Floriana resembled her
 “ excessively, and inflamed my soul with
 “ a momentary passion; but ah! how dif-
 “ ferent to my former one!—Hate mingled
 “ with my feelings of desire for Floriana;
 “ I saw her blessed with happiness, with a
 “ lovely infant, and a husband whom she
 “ tenderly loved; such, I said, ought to
 “ have been the fate of my lost Adelmorne;
 “ and shall another undisturbedly possess
 “ these pleasures? *My child* has no mo-
 “ ther to soothe its piteous cries, or to enjoy
 “ its infant caresses; the cold bosom of
 “ Adelmorne can no more throb respon-
 “ sive to the pressure of mine! her eyes
 “ beam no more with tears of tenderness
 “ upon the father of her infant! no, they
 “ are closed for ever! *her* heart is cold
 “ and silent. Shall another revel in my
 “ sight

“ sight in all these enjoyments, which I
 “ have lost —never, never to regain ?

“ Maddened by these reflections, I tore
 “ Floriana from her home, and, together
 “ with her infant daughter, conveyed her
 “ to the Forest of St. Bernard ; my in-
 “ tention was at once to gratify my pas-
 “ sions of desire and of revenge—this spot
 “ I had formerly discovered ; it was a
 “ deserted ruin, inhabited by a wretch,
 “ whose poverty and crimes had banished
 “ him from the society of his fellow crea-
 “ tures. To this man I confided my in-
 “ tentions ; and by the reward I gave him,
 “ might not only have purchased his fide-
 “ lity, but his eternal perdition. Flo-
 “ riana’s tears and supplications, instead
 “ of moving my soul to compunction, only
 “ gratified the barbarity of my feelings ;
 “ vainly did she kneel at my feet, and with
 “ trembling hands implore mercy for her-
 “ self and babe ; vainly did she lift her
 “ swimming eyes to my face, and in ac-
 “ cents

“ cents of despair, implore me to restore
 “ her to her lord ! Her luckless counte-
 “ nance beamed forth a glance of agony ;
 “ it was the image of my lost Adelmorne ;
 “ inspired with fury, I seized the child
 “ from her arms ; vainly she attempted
 “ to struggle with me for it ; again did
 “ the glance of Adelmorne’s eyes beam
 “ from beneath her long lashes ; fury and
 “ madness inspired me—for a moment I
 “ caught her to my bursting heart, which
 “ trembled with convulsive agitation—a
 “ few imperfect words caught my ears,
 “ they were curses called down upon me---
 “ I drew my dagger in an agony of fury,
 “ and with one deep blow plunged it in
 “ her heart ! her last agonies filled me with
 “ horror—I threw her on the bed, flew
 “ from the apartment, and dragged after
 “ me her blood-stained scarf.

“ Oh God ! to what a pitch of ferocity
 “ had wretchedness reduced me ! Not so,
 “ had Adelmorne knelt to me ; one tear of

“ her’s would have moulded my every
 “ feeling to her wishes ; a sigh never had
 “ been suffered to escape her bosom, but
 “ it was mingled by the protestations of
 “ love, which broke from my lips.

“ The crime I had committed, seemed
 “ to lighten my mind ; . revenge was in
 “ some measure sated ; I had made others
 “ as wretched as myself, and I was satis-
 “ fied. Her daughter Agnes I instantly
 “ gave to Ithona, with directions to have
 “ her carefully attended. Strange are the
 “ feelings of the human heart—the dread-
 “ ful scenes of my barbarity became a fa-
 “ vourite place of resort ; I delighted for
 “ some days to view the ghastly corpse of
 “ Floriana—all my evil passions seemed
 “ gratified—anguish itself was sated ; and,
 “ inconsistent as it may appear, in this
 “ den of wickedness, in the very contem-
 “ plation and enjoyment of the most hor-
 “ rible of crimes, my bosom once more
 “ became the seat of virtuous sensations.

“ I

“ I regretted not the past, but I determined
 “ differently to spend the future, and in the
 “ education of my son and Agnes, to pass
 “ the remainder of my days.

“ I now determined to quit this spot ;
 “ but the night preceding my departure,
 “ brought the wretched husband of Flo-
 “ riana to the ruins of St. Bernard. Do-
 “ minick, the villain who inhabited the
 “ place, first gave me intelligence of his
 “ arrival ; I instantly imagined that the
 “ earl had discovered the author of his in-
 “ juries, and was arrived for the purpose
 “ of vengeance. I intended to draw him
 “ into a distant part of the ruin, but in the
 “ dark, mistook his Esquire for himself ;
 “ we engaged, and in the first encounter,
 “ he severed my hand from my arm ; weak
 “ from loss of blood, I with difficulty es-
 “ caped their search. I now took refuge
 “ once more at Mont Eagle, and in the
 “ smiles of my young infant boy, tasted a
 “ bliss that would have been better bestowed
 “ upon

“ upon a better man. But there were mo-
 “ ments, when the sight of you occasioned
 “ me the most poignant misery, and my
 “ manifestations of anguish greatly asto-
 “ nished both my brother and his wife;
 “ they vainly endeavoured to draw from
 “ me the history of my misfortunes, or
 “ soothe the pains I eternally endured.
 “ Ithona, angered and disappointed at the
 “ ill success of all his plans, at this time
 “ quitted me; would to God that he had
 “ never returned!

“ You, Ethelmorne, you were the object
 “ of my tenderest care—my sole delight!
 “ *your* happiness, my only hope! *your*
 “ greatness, my only ambition. As yet,
 “ my brother had no children, and I fer-
 “ vently fixed my heart upon seeing you
 “ heir to what I considered my right: but
 “ it was otherwise destined—My brother
 “ had a son!—the illness of Editha at
 “ this period well nigh cost her her life;
 “ Osmond, who had ever been a slave to a
 “ weak

“ weak and credulous superstition, when
 “ Editha was in the utmost danger, made
 “ a solemn vow to serve six years before
 “ Jerusalem, should she recover : she did
 “ recover, and bequeathing her and your
 “ cousin to my protection, he departed.
 “ —Alas ! never did they meet again.

“ It was now my evil genius again pre-
 “ vailed ; and since disastrous love had
 “ now no longer power to urge me into
 “ crimes, disappointed ambition was called
 “ in to aid hell’s dark infernal purpose.
 “ Ithona now returned to Mont Eagle ; I
 “ had sunk into despondency, and patiently
 “ resigned myself to my fate : my temper
 “ had become gloomy and melancholy,
 “ but it had lost all barbarity ; and for
 “ some time I attended the despairing
 “ Editha, who absolutely adored my bro-
 “ ther with sincere affection.

“ Ithona brought with him an interesting
 “ youth, called Bevis de Wilton : my son
 “ was daily improving in beauty ; he grew
 “ every

“ every day more like my Adelmorne,
 “ while my brother’s child was by nature
 “ delicate, and his very life uncertain.
 “ Ithona at first contented himself with
 “ pitying my misfortune, and regretting
 “ the loss my Ethelmorne would sustain.
 “ At length, his regrets rose to remon-
 “ strances, and he argued with me on the
 “ cruelty and injustice of my tamely giving
 “ up my rights, and which, he maintained,
 “ was very reprehensible on my child’s
 “ account. I listened to him with too
 “ much attention ; I imbibed the precepts
 “ he delivered, and the cursed flame of
 “ ambition was soon lighted again in my
 “ bosom. Fertile in invention, *he* pro-
 “ posed my substituting my son for my
 “ brother’s, during his absence ; but Edi-
 “ tha and Lord Falconberg, my brother’s
 “ dearest friend, were subjects of great
 “ fear and obstruction to me. At length
 “ I succeeded in tormenting Editha into a
 “ state of delirium, by reports I raised of
 “ Osmond’s

“ Osmond’s death. To the inquiries of
 “ Lord Falconberg, we forged such an-
 “ swers as suited our purpose ; and as he
 “ was obliged at this period to quit Nor-
 “ thumberland, we were permitted unin-
 “ terruptedly to proceed in our contri-
 “ vances. Ithona once hinted the death of
 “ my infant nephew ; but I received his pro-
 “ position with so much unfeigned horror,
 “ that he feared again to renew the subject.
 “ I followed his advice, however, in offering
 “ my hand to Editha, and assuring her of
 “ the death of her husband ; she received
 “ my proposals with horror, and from that
 “ moment doubted the death of her lord ;
 “ I found it likewise vain to endeavour to
 “ impose you upon her as her son, although
 “ she had been parted from both for some
 “ time. At length the report of Osmond’s
 “ death reached Lord Falconberg from
 “ another quarter ; and on my shewing
 “ her a letter to me from that nobleman,
 “ and which she knew to be his hand-
 “ writing

“ writing, telling me of my supposed loss,
 “ that fatal illness seized her, which too
 “ soon hurried her into the tomb.

“ No sooner was this murdered saint
 “ hidden in her grave, than we plotted in
 “ what manner to carry on our schemes
 “ upon the children. My brother’s child
 “ had never been christened; it had been
 “ delayed, in order to be performed in the
 “ most magnificent manner; but Editha’s
 “ spirits had never yet allowed her to pre-
 “ pare for the festival—You, my boy, had
 “ been christened after your dear mother;
 “ but on her death, and the murder of her
 “ husband and brother, I feared to call you
 “ Ethelmorne, lest the same might be a
 “ sort of clue for her relations. I had con-
 “ sequently, on your introduction into the
 “ family of my brother, by Ithona’s advice,
 “ written a paper, purporting that your
 “ name was Eustace.—Osmond had ever
 “ intended his son should be called Ethel-
 “ morne after his father, and I now thought
 “ it.

“ it a favourable opportunity of giving my
 “ darling that name, whose sound so for-
 “ cibly recalled my adored to my mind—
 “ and, by naming the son of Osmond, *Eu-*
 “ *stace*, thus cut off a connection of ideas,
 “ which name, and great family likeness
 “ might inspire. We therefore publicly,
 “ and with great pomp, celebrated the
 “ christening of the two children. My
 “ son was displayed to numerous Barons;
 “ as the son of Osmond, and was christened
 “ after his grandfather, Ethelmorne.

“ While the rightful heir received from
 “ me, as my son, the name of *Eustace* ; I
 “ had the satisfaction to remark, that no
 “ person seemed to entertain the slightest
 “ suspicion of the change. We now re-
 “ velled in uninterrupted luxury, till the
 “ return of Lord Falconberg gave us some
 “ uneasiness. The report of my brother’s
 “ death, had been discovered to be without
 “ foundation ; and the Baron of Wolf-
 “ north solicited to have his son at his
 “ Castle

“ Castle for some time. I was fearful,
“ however, that the change was yet too
“ young to bear the inspection of so near a
“ friend, and I refused to comply. About
“ this time, some reports reached our ears,
“ that he had a suspicion of what was going
“ on, and we confined Eustace in a deso-
“ late part of the Castle: our terror was
“ increased, by finding that Conrade, a
“ faithful servant of the Lady Editha,
“ had escaped to Wolfnorth; for we had
“ long feared his suspicions, and had actu-
“ ally, but the night before, administered
“ to him a poisoned cup. 'Tis true, Ithona
“ immediately went to Wolfnorth, and
“ Lord Falconberg seemed not to have
“ any suspicions on the subject; but the
“ event proved otherwise; for Lord Fal-
“ conberg wrote immediately to my bro-
“ ther, and urgently requested him to re-
“ turn to his domains.

“ We had long determined upon the
“ death of Falconberg; and it was now
“ become

“ become a circumstance of immediate in-
 “ terest. Young De Wilton had been for
 “ some time placed about the person of my
 “ brother ; I had sent him highly recom-
 “ mended, and he had joined him in atten-
 “ dance with the most honourable and amia-
 “ ble of young men about his person, I mean
 “ Sir Philip Fitz Aubrey. De Wilton pos-
 “ sessed talents which, turned to a better
 “ purpose, could have rendered him a
 “ splendid member of society ; but he was
 “ devoted to Ithona, and kept up a strict
 “ correspondence with him. To him we
 “ confided the fate of Falconberg, and the
 “ method by which his death was to be
 “ obtained, was as follows :

“ The Baron, my brother, had given Lord
 “ Falconberg, ere he departed for the Holy
 “ Land, a bowl of curious and exquisite work-
 “ manship ; Ithona by some stratagem had
 “ obtained a sight of this bowl, and caused
 “ to be manufactured a medal out of a
 “ mixture of metals, which resembled the
 “ work-

“ workmanship of the bowl to a miracu-
 “ lous degree ; but noxious indeed were
 “ the effects of the metallic poison ! a very
 “ few weeks worn next the body, its poison
 “ would penetrate into the system, or a cer-
 “ tain death might be inhaled in its poisonous
 “ effluvia. This medal Ithona sent to De
 “ Wilton, with instructions to forge a letter
 “ from my brother to his friend, and to en-
 “ close him the medal : but Osmond suddenly
 “ returning, De Wilton had scarcely time to
 “ give in notice of it, ere my brother arrived
 “ in England. It was now that I began to
 “ fear your cousin’s increasing likeness to
 “ Editha ; and the beautiful looks which
 “ adorned his countenance, would betray to
 “ my brother the imposition we had prac-
 “ tised ; and in looking into the revenues of
 “ the estate, their distracted and squandered
 “ situation, and the disgrace which would
 “ consequently fall upon me, I was driven
 “ to despair. Ithona ridiculed my fears, and
 “ laughed at the horror I manifested at
 “ the

“ the approach of the usurper of my rights,
 “ as he styled him ; he aroused all my am-
 “ bition and the love I bore thee—and for
 “ thy sake, my Ethelmorne, I consented to
 “ the eternal imprisonment of Osmond.
 “ Never for a moment, however, did I con-
 “ ceive the intention to murder him, to that
 “ I never would have consented ; unna-
 “ tural as I was, the murder of my brother
 “ was neither plotted or executed by me ;
 “ the monstrous Ithona alone could be ca-
 “ pable of so horrible a deed. It was set-
 “ tled by Osmond, that as he meant to en-
 “ trust his troops to Sir Philip Fitz Au-
 “ brey, and Sir Aymer de Valance, that he
 “ would proceed alone to Mont Eagle, or
 “ only attended by one esquire. De Wil-
 “ ton endeavoured, by every means in his
 “ power, to accompany him, in order to
 “ betray him into our hands, but in vain ;
 “ for the Baron took with him Guy de
 “ Montgomerie, and De Wilton was obliged
 “ to accompany Fitz Aubrey’s party to
 “ Wolfnorth.

“ Wolfnorth. He did not, however, fail
 “ in performing to us some part of his
 “ duty ; for in the course of the evening,
 “ he contrived to present the poisoned me-
 “ dal to Lord Falconberg. But oh !
 “ Ethelmorne, the ways of Heaven are
 “ strange ;—at the moment De Wilton
 “ raised the goblet to his lips, to quaff my
 “ brother’s health—(for so Lord Falcon-
 “ berg willed it) — at that dire moment,
 “ Osmond, in the power of Ithona, breathed
 “ his last ! and his spirit, reluctant to bid
 “ this earth farewell, without presenting
 “ itself to the eyes of his earliest friend,
 “ appeared in the hall of Wolfnorth !—it
 “ inspired his friends’ hearts with anguish
 “ and horror, and blanched the cheek of
 “ De Wilton with eternal paleness.

“ Osmond, accompanied by Montgo-
 “ merie, pursued his way to the forest of
 “ Mont Eagle ; at length he sent forward
 “ his faithful esquire, to apprise his brother
 “ of his arrival. No sooner was he alone,
 “ and

“ and plunged in the darkest of the forest,
 “ than Ithona and Sir Hildebrand dragged
 “ him from his horse into a dismal cavern,
 “ where Ithona pierced him in the temple,
 “ which caused his immediate death. He
 “ was not, however, unpunished ; for
 “ Ryno, the faithful Danish dog of my
 “ brother, flew upon him, and would have
 “ instantly destroyed him, had he not been
 “ rescued by the other villains ; he re-
 “ ceived a bite in his hand, of the most
 “ severe nature. They now carried the
 “ body of my brother back to the road-side,
 “ and placing him against the trunk of a
 “ tree, retired to wait our approach ; the
 “ storm was very appalling, and displaced
 “ the body several times ; once, as Ithona
 “ returned to put it in a proper position, a
 “ flash of dreadful lightning, lanced by the
 “ offended Almighty, blasted the dreadful
 “ spot—dashed Ithona on the ground—
 “ and seared the oak against which the
 “ body of Osmond lay !

“ Alas !

“ Alas ! Ethelmorne, when I found that
 “ my brother was indeed no more—when I
 “ recollected that I had by my countenance
 “ abetted this dreadful crime, — I may
 “ safely say, my anguish was unequalled !
 “ —when we were alone, I upbraided
 “ Ithona with the deed ; he attempted to
 “ defend himself, his words were breathed
 “ on air, and my bosom became the seat of
 “ wretchedness and despair. During the
 “ period of my first illness, Lord Falcon-
 “ berg expired ; my nephew was now com-
 “ pletely in my power ; I saw you, my
 “ child, the son of my Adelmorne, enjoying
 “ the possessions which I believed to be
 “ your right—but remorse and penitence
 “ had seized possession of my mind ; the
 “ forms of Fitzalan—of Montacute—of
 “ Floriana—and my brother—the shade of
 “ poor Editha--flitted eternally in my sight,
 “ and rendered my existence a burthen I
 “ could scarcely support. The sight of
 “ Eustace plunged me into the most dread-
 “ ful

“ ful excesses of phrenzy, and hating the
 “ world, every surrounding object, and
 “ more than all, myself—I at length deter-
 “ mined to retire for ever to this solitary
 “ cell, and pass the wretched remnant of
 “ my days, in doing penance for my
 “ crimes. By a strange incident I had
 “ discovered the villainy of Ithona : this
 “ was a bitter stroke ! I found the only
 “ being whom I had ever considered as my
 “ friend, had made me the instrument of
 “ his own designs—Thus wounded in my
 “ peace, wounded in my friendship—alas !
 “ mark the wretched sacrifice to guilt and
 “ passion !

“ Oh Ethelmorne ! banish, I entreat, the
 “ wretches who surround you—keep not
 “ the monstrous Ithona about your person
 “ —banish the perfidious De Wilton !

“ Spare—oh spare the wretched Emma !
 “ restore her to her home and to her bro-
 “ ther—persist not, Ethelmorne, persist not
 “ in her destruction. Is not my fate a

“ warning to you, that however successful
 “ guilt may be, it is only repaid by misery
 “ and destruction ? Return, return, my
 “ Ethelmorne, to the path of virtue—your
 “ conduct will break my wretched heart,
 “ even if your dagger does not prematurely
 “ make it cease to beat.”

The papers here were broken off—the
 above was enclosed and sealed in the fol-
 lowing, which appeared to be but lately
 written.

“ Sixteen years have passed away, and
 “ do I see thee, Thanet, so near the dire
 “ abode of thy destroyer ? But oh ! if thou
 “ couldst know the pangs which rack my
 “ soul, the husband even of Floriana would
 “ pity me. Weep not, Thanet, the death of
 “ thy child—Agnes lives, pure and spotless
 “ as I received her ; she passes for the sister
 “ of the virtuous Eustace, my nephew, and
 “ the lawful heir of Mont Eagle, whose
 “ per-

“ persecutions, and whose injuries must
 “ now end.

“ The story of the wretched man who
 “ now addresses you, is enclosed in this
 “ paper; it was written three years ago,
 “ in order to induce my barbarous son to
 “ release the sister of Sijebert de Lucy, the
 “ Lord of Montalt, whom he had torn from
 “ her friends, and confined in the dungeons
 “ of the Castle: but before I had an op-
 “ portunity of presenting to his view these
 “ dreadful papers, he had succeeded in her
 “ destruction; and his nuptial ceremony was
 “ performed by Sebastian, a monk of this
 “ monastery, of whose melancholy vaults
 “ I am now an inhabitant. Her cries
 “ reached my ears even in this dire abode!
 “ I heard her shriek for mercy, vainly call
 “ upon her brother, and her adored Eliss
 “ D'Aubigny, to rescue her!—I sought to
 “ protect the poor maid, but in return was
 “ chained to the dungeon—Yes, the son of
 “ Adelmorne chained me to my dungeon,
 “ inflicted

“ inflicted all the pangs of famine upon
 “ me, and left me to curse the hour of my
 “ birth : while his unfortunate victim
 “ was confined until she would willingly
 “ acknowledge herself his wife. She re-
 “ fused to comply with his desires, and ere
 “ yet a year had passed over her miserable
 “ head, he, exasperated with her hatred,
 “ plunged his dagger in her innocent bo-
 “ som, and by that means vainly hoped,
 “ that with her, would die the knowledge
 “ of his crime——Her body is now in one
 “ of the vaults of the Castle.

“ His guilt, his barbarity, has wrested
 “ from me the secret of his birth ; as thou,
 “ Thanet, art so near the scene of guilt, I
 “ call upon thee to preserve the son of Os-
 “ mond and of Editha !——Save the vir-
 “ tuous Eustace—restore him to his rights
 “ —and drag me from the dungeons be-
 “ neath the Castle, to bear witness to his
 “ birth—remember, that in Ignatius lives
 “ Leofwin Lord Fitz Arnulf - - - - -

“ But

“ But I have yet much to relate—and you
 “ have yet to bless me, for having saved
 “ your child from the violence of my bar-
 “ barous and unprincipled son.

“ No sooner had he succeeded in de-
 “ stroying his wife, than I discovered his
 “ hatred to his young cousin, and I heard
 “ that he had barbarously insulted him :
 “ in vain I remonstrated with him upon
 “ his alluring a youth, whose name and
 “ rights he had usurped, and then actually
 “ enjoyed ; he sneered at my remonstrances
 “ and departed. But what was my horror,
 “ when I found that he had endeavoured
 “ to violate the daughter of Floriana ! the
 “ artless, the innocent Agnes ! I instantly
 “ sent for him, and finding no persuasions
 “ could prevail on him to desist ; I used
 “ the only stratagem which remained, and
 “ assured him that she was his own sister.
 “ For once I succeeded in preventing his
 “ committing another horrible crime ; but
 “ having threatened him, in a moment of
 “ anger,

“ anger, to restore Eustace to his rights,
 “ if he persisted in his unprincipled con-
 “ duct ; I found, when he left me, that he
 “ had made a violent attempt upon him, and
 “ that Sir Hildebrand had alone saved his
 “ life---For to this man I had given secret
 “ and positive injunctions, that the life of
 “ Eustace should not be taken.

“ Ethelmorne now attacked him in the
 “ fortress of Fitz Arnulf, where he had
 “ retired with his supposed sister ; every
 “ stratagem was tried in order to get this
 “ persecuted young hero into his power ;
 “ in vain, for his own valour and wisdom,
 “ combined with the protection of those
 “ guardian angels who watch over the vir-
 “ tuous, guarded him from the machina-
 “ tions of my son. Sir Hildebrand, who
 “ informed me of every thing that passed,
 “ assured me that Ethelmorne had a new
 “ scheme in view : it was no other, than to
 “ wed the daughter of the late Lord Fal-
 “ conberg, whom he had accidentally seen
 “ and

“ and become enamoured of, and whose im-
 “ mense possessions he coveted. He soon
 “ made known to me; himself, his desire to
 “ wed the Lady Ethelburga ; and though
 “ I well knew that Eustace was the hus-
 “ band destined her by her father and my
 “ brother, I willingly encouraged my son
 “ to a connection, which I hoped would
 “ stop the current of his crimes, and attach
 “ his heart to virtue.

“ A tournament was now given at Wolf-
 “ north upon her coming of age, and Ethel-
 “ morne, decorated with care, and attend-
 “ ed by a splendid retinue, repaired to her
 “ court. He was well received by the
 “ Warden and the young Baroness, and,
 “ elated with pride and vanity, forgot there
 “ lived his superior in the world. My son,
 “ alas ! was always renowned for his cou-
 “ rage, his grace, his beauty, and his
 “ skill ; no person alone in the kingdom
 “ could rival him, and did so wherever
 “ they met ; and, wonderful to relate, this
 “ person

“ person was his poor, his deserted cousin.
“ Ethelmorne absolutely feared him, and
“ dreaded to encounter him.

“ It so happened, that Eustace on the
“ second day of the tournament overcame
“ him—he was to return on the following
“ day to seal his conquest; but Ethel-
“ morne, stung with envy, and inflamed
“ with hatred, determined on his murder.
“ Ever since he became enamoured of
“ Ethelburga, he had placed a secret emis-
“ sary around her person; deep, design-
“ ing, and by nature cruel and unfeeling,
“ Fitz Osborne was well calculated to be
“ his creature. This diabolical young
“ man contrived to rescue Fitz Aubrey,
“ the sole guardian of Ethelburga, from
“ the weapons of a supposed band of rob-
“ bers, but who were no others than vas-
“ sals of Ethelmorne in disguise. Fitz
“ Aubrey to a virtuous and honourable
“ soul, united an unsuspicious and credu-
“ lous mind, easily became the dupe of
“ Fitz

“ Fitz Osborne, and he placed this monster about the being whom he loved dearer than his life——”

A tear trickled down the cheek of Fitz Aubrey, his soul trembled within him; but the drop was quickly kissed off by his Ethelburga's affectionate lips.

“ Fitz Osborne, who wanted not for penetration, soon discovered that Sir Philip was bigoted and superstitious—he had found some secret passages which led from the Castle, and one so nicely contrived, that a door formed by one of the buttresses, was impossible to be discovered by the nicest inspection. The night, therefore, previous to the day on which Eustace was to return, Ethel-morne by these secret passages had communication with Ithone and De Wilton, whom he deputed to murder his cousin. Fortunately for the poor boy, this plan did not succeed: Fitz Alwy still persisted in these nightly excursions, and was once
‘ nearly

“ nearly discovered by Sir Morcar de Mow-
 “ bray, and Sir Edwin Montague. He,
 “ however, played the ghost, and suddenly
 “ entering by the concealed door, baffled
 “ their inquiries.

“ It would be vain to repeat to you, that
 “ Eustace gained the favour of the De
 “ Warrennes from a series of the most
 “ gallant actions—That the young Baro-
 “ ness, Ethelburga, fondly loves him, and
 “ thus unconsciously obeys the commands
 “ of her departed father——But oh ! know
 “ that it was my Ethelmorne, armed with
 “ those ruffians, Ithona, De Wilton, and
 “ Fitz Osborne, who cut short the life of
 “ that gallant, that honourable and lament-
 “ ed man, De Mowbray—who barbarously
 “ murdered him ! and the secret accuser of
 “ Eustace, was Fitz Osborne——Fitz Os-
 “ borne — who promised to betray the
 “ standard of Ethelburga into the hands of
 “ Ethelmorne, and who, in all these damn-
 “ ing acts, was the vile agent of my son—
 “ Ethel-

“ Ethelmorne’s cruel conduct to an
 “ amiable youth he had in his power,
 “ greatly assisted to bring me to the de-
 “ termination of doing justice to my ne-
 “ phew. Never shall I forget the ago-
 “ nized groans of young Ethelred of Mont
 “ Rose, when the most cruel tortures were
 “ inflicted upon him, or the magnanimous
 “ fidelity he to the last retained to his
 “ friend Eustace. Yet have ye to know
 “ that the Abbot Bertrand, and Sir Philip
 “ Fitz Aubrey, are indebted to me for their
 “ existence ; for my son believes, that he
 “ has administered poison to them in a
 “ draught he presented at Wolfnorth, but
 “ that draught was one of life, not death,
 “ prepared by my hand.—But imagine the
 “ horror which seized my mind, on my per-
 “ ceiving on the bosom of my son, some
 “ time ago, the fatal medal which had been
 “ the cause of Lord Falconberg’s decease.
 “ It appears that that departed nobleman
 “ had bequeathed it, unsuspectingly, to his
 “ daughter,

“ daughter, with directions to give it to
 “ her future husband, and that husband he
 “ had directed to be the son of Osmond.
 “ The young Ethelburga, in consequence,
 “ gave the medal to my son, who wore it
 “ next his heart—I marked his fast fading
 “ cheek with dismay—I watched his de-
 “ clining health with extreme emotion; at
 “ length he complained of that fatal op-
 “ pressive pain around his heart; I opened
 “ his bosom, to examine it—Oh God!
 “ what were my feelings! - - - - -
 “ No sooner did I explain to him the pur-
 “ pose and effects of that horrid gift, than
 “ he cast it from him, and from that mo-
 “ ment he recovered, with the aid of some
 “ drugs I administered to him; he deli-
 “ vered the medal to De Wilton, with
 “ orders to get it conveyed into Eustace’s
 “ possession, in hopes by that method to
 “ deprive him of life; but De Wilton
 “ having a secret animosity to poor Edwin
 “ Montague, made the thoughtless and
 “ well-

“ well-meaning Mont Rose, the perpetrator of this barbarous revenge.

“ But no more——days of the past fade from my view ! the time calls for action.

“ Thanet ; Fitz Aubrey is the prisoner of my son—he lingers out his wretched existence in the dungeons of Mont Eagle ; and unless you take a speedy method to free Eustace and Ethelburga, these amiable young people will be lost for ever.

“ But, oh Thanet, as I have preserved thy child, so spare mine ; preserve my Ethelmorne, the son of my last love, preserve and spare him for repentance !”



Sir Philip closed the manuscript—he raised his eyes upon the amiable lovers, Eustace pressed the hand of Ethelburga to
his

his honourable heart, while the Warden emphatically ejaculated—

‘ Thanks be to God, that the houses of
‘ Wolfnorth and Mont Eagle are at length
‘ united !’

As he uttered these words, he arose, and with the rest of his friends quitted the apartment ; Eustace, his eyes beaming love and languishing tenderness, sunk on his knee before the mistress of his soul.

‘ And oh, Ethelburga !’ (he softly exclaimed) ‘ and shall I possess this hand, the
‘ object of my most ambitious hopes ? will
‘ my faithful and tender love be at last so
‘ rewarded ? - - - - - My heart,
‘ Ethelburga, faints with extacy ! oh speak,
‘ and let my enamoured senses, from those
‘ dear smiling lips, hear the confirmation
‘ of my happiness !’

As he ceased, a tear of tenderness rolled down his glowing cheek ; while the trembling Ethelburga, who, in every fibre of her heart returned his passion, flung around
his

his neck her lovely arm, and softly bending over him, pressed her innocent lips to his fair forehead.

‘ Eustace, beloved hero of my soul ! may
 ‘ every act of your Ethelburga’s insure your
 ‘ happiness ! this heart, Eustace, never has
 ‘ beat sensible of love, but for you alone—
 ‘ This heart, warmed by your beauty,—
 ‘ this heart, whose sweetest sensations were
 ‘ created by the soft glances of those lovely
 ‘ eyes, — this heart esteems you for your
 ‘ worth, your fidelity, and your honour—
 ‘ Oh ! my hero ! deign to accept this un-
 ‘ worthy hand, which, clasped in thine
 ‘ through life, till its latest pulse forsake
 ‘ it, may go down with thee to the vale of
 ‘ death, in the sweet attentions of friend-
 ‘ ship, the obligations of cheerful duty,
 ‘ and the tender and soothing consolations
 ‘ of the tenderest love ! - - - - - What,
 ‘ my Eustace, will *then* have power to afflict
 ‘ us ? ———’

Eustace clasped her to his heart, and as
 she

she sunk overcome in his trembling
he murmured in accents of extacy, “
“ shall *then* have power to afflict us ?”

finis.

POSTSCRIPT.

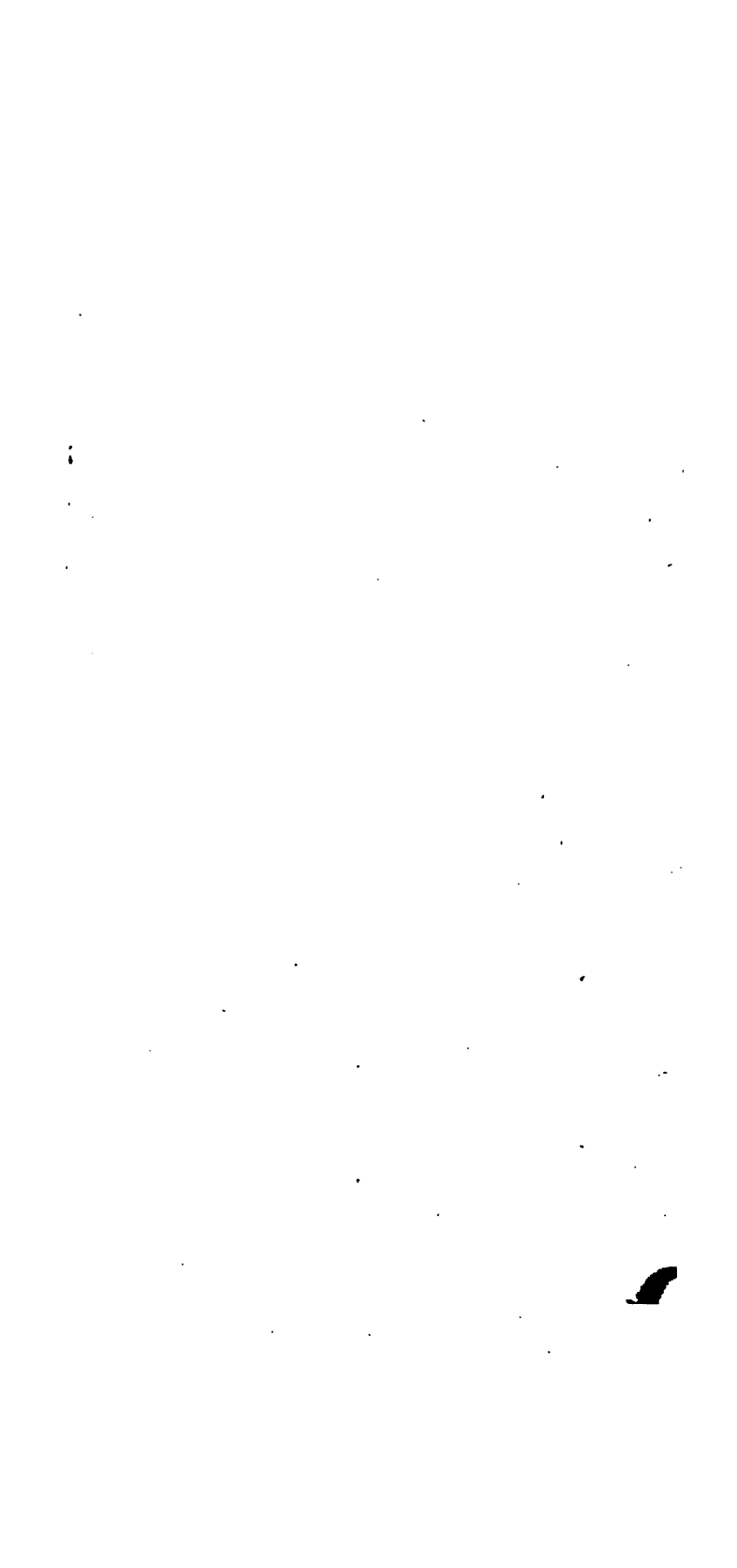
THE Author cannot commit this Work to the Public, without soliciting the indulgence of the Reader with regard to many of those errors which may have escaped correction in the press; trusting that the very severe indisposition under which she has laboured for some weeks past, will be deemed a sufficient apology, as during that period she has been entirely unequal to the exertion of revising the Work.

Devonshire Street.



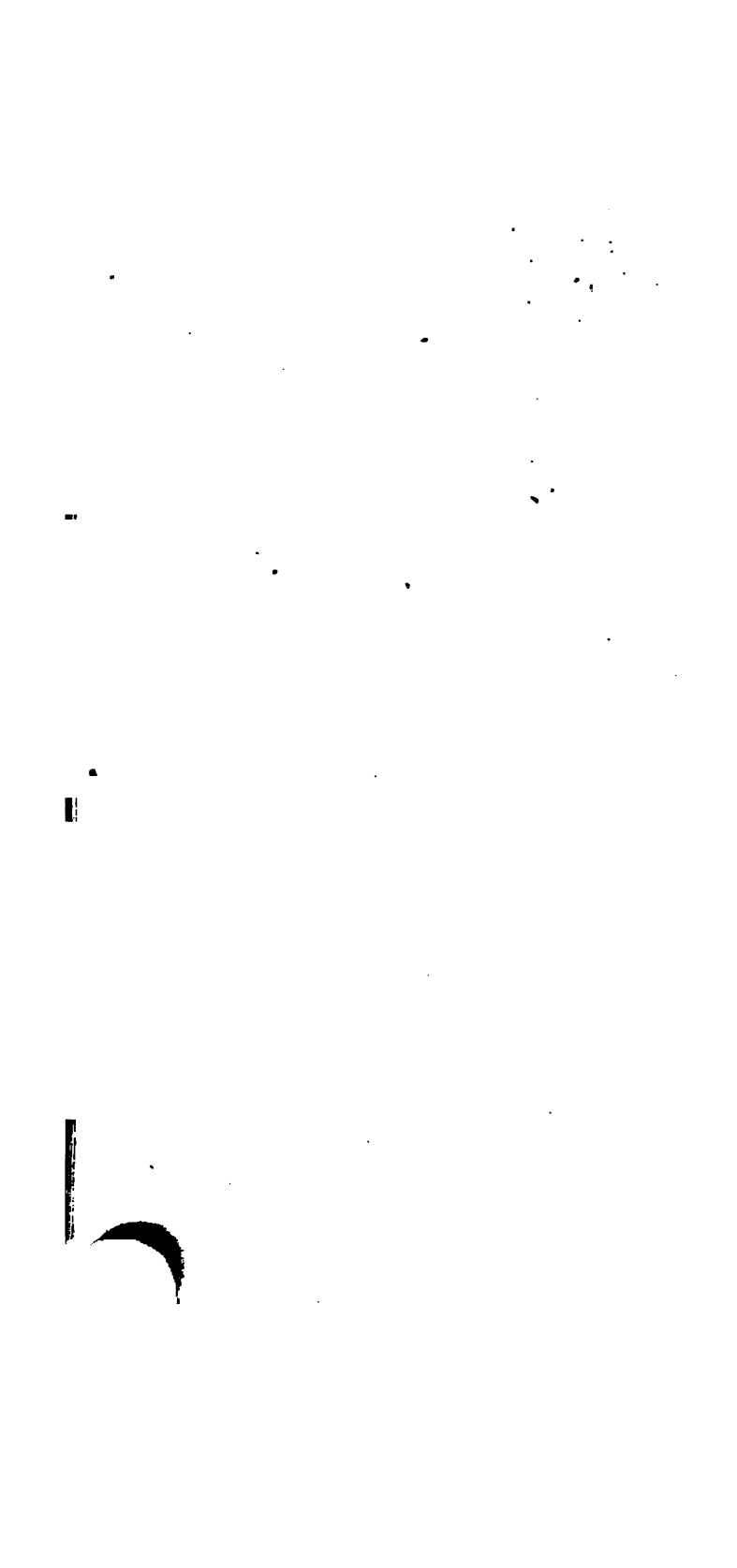
















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